R. Scott Stevenson

2/-

GARSIDE'S CAREER

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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THE DOORWAY.
SPRING IN BLOOMSBURY.

GARSIDE'S CAREER

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

BY

HAROLD BRIGHOUSE

Harold Brighouse.

LONDON
CONSTABLE AND COMPANY LTD.
1914

TO

A. N. MONKHOUSE

Amateur Societies wishing to perform this play should apply to the author's agents, Messrs. Samuel French Ltd., 26 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C., from whom permission must be obtained.

Produced for the first time by Miss Horniman's Company at the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester, on February 2nd, 1914, with the following cast—

Mrs. Garside	Mrs. A. B. Tapping
Margaret Shawcross	Irene Rooke
Peter Garside	Milton Rosmer
Denis O'Callaghan	Herbert Lomas
Karl Marx Jones	Charles Bibby
Ned Applegarth	Percy Foster
Fred Mottram	Horace Braham
Gladys Mottram	Beatrice Terry
Lady Mottram	Muriel Pope
Timson	Leonard Mudie

The play produced by Douglas Gordon.

GARSIDE'S CAREER

ACT I

Interior of an artisan cottage. Door centre, leading direct to street, door right to house. Fireplace with kitchen range left. Table centre, with print cloth. Two plain chairs under it, one left, one centre, facing audience. Rocking-chair by fireplace. Two chairs against wall right, above door. Dresser right, below door. Small hanging bookcase on wall, left centre. Window right centre. On walls plainly framed photographs of Socialist leaders—Blatchford, Hyndman, Hardie. The time is 7.0 p.m. on a June evening.

MRS. GARSIDE *is a working-class woman of 50, grey-haired, slight, with red toil-worn hands and a face expressive of resignation marred by occasional petulance, dressed in a rough serge skirt, dark print blouse, elastic-sided boots, and a white apron. She sits in the rocking-chair, watching the cheap alarm-clock fretfully. Outside a boy is heard calling "Last Edishun." She rises hastily, feels on the mantelpiece for her purse, opens the door centre and buys a paper from the boy who appears through the doorway. She closes door, sits centre and spreads the paper on the table, rises again and gets spectacle-case from mantelpiece. She sits with spectacles on and rapidly goes through the paper seeking some particular item.*

The door centre opens and MARGARET SHAWCROSS *enters. She is young, dark, with a face beautiful in expression rather than feature. It is the face of an idealist, one who would go through fire and water for the faith that is in her.*

She is a school teacher, speaking with an educated voice in a slightly apparent northern accent, dressed neatly and serviceably. MRS. GARSIDE *turns eagerly as she enters and is disappointed on seeing* MARGARET.

MRS. GAR. Oh, it's you. I thought it might be——

MAR. (*closing door, sympathetically*). Yes. But it's too early to expect Peter back yet.

MRS. G. (*with some truculence*). He'll not be long. He's always said he'd let his mother be the first to hear the news.

MAR. (*gently*). You don't mind my being here to hear it with you ?

MRS. G. (*rising and putting spectacles back on mantelpiece, speaking ungraciously*). No, you've got a right to hear it too, Margaret. (MARGARET *picks up paper.*) I can't find anything in that.

MAR. Peter said the results come out too late for the evening papers.

MRS. G. He never told me. (MARGARET *folds paper on table.*) I'm glad though. There's no one else 'ull know a-front of me. He'll bring the good news home himself. He's coming now as fast as train and car 'ull bring him. (*Sitting in rocking-chair.*)

MAR. Yes. He knows we're waiting here, we two who care for Peter more than anything on earth.

MRS. G. (*giving her a jealous glance*). I wish he'd come.

MAR. Try to be calm, Mrs. Garside.

MRS. G. (*irritably*). Calm ? How can I be calm ? I'm on edge till I know. (*Rocking her chair quickly.*)

MAR. (*trying to soothe her*). It isn't as if he can't try again if he's not through this time.

MRS. G. (*confidently, keeping her chair still*). He'll have no need to try again. I've a son and his name this night is Peter Garside, B.A. I know he's through.

MAR. (*sitting in chair left of table*). Then if you're sure ——

MRS. G. Yes. I know I'm a fidget. I want to hear it from his own lips. He's worked so hard he can't fail. (*Accusingly.*) You don't believe me, Margaret. You're not sure of him.

MAR. (*with elbows on table and head on hands*). I'm fearful of the odds against him—the chances that the others have and he hasn't. *Peter's* to work for his living. *They're* free to study all day long. (*Rising, enthusiastically.*) Oh, if he does it, what a triumph for our class. Peter Garside, the Board School boy, the working engineer, keeping himself and you, and studying at night for his degree.

MRS. G. (*dogmatically*). The odds don't count. I know Peter. Peter's good enough for any odds. You doubt him, Margaret.

MAR. No. I've seen him work. I've worked with him till he distanced me and left me far behind. He knows enough to pass, to pass above them all——

MRS. G. Yes, yes!

MAR. But examinations are a fearful hazard.

MRS. G. Not to Peter. He's fighting for his class, he's showing them he's the better man. He can work with his hands and they can't, and he can work with his brain as well as the best of them.

MAR. He'll do it. It may not be this time, but he'll do it in the end.

MRS. G. (*obstinately*). This time, Margaret.

MAR. I do hope so.

MRS. G. (*looking at the clock*). Do you think there's been a breakdown on the cars?

MAR. No, no.

MRS. G. (*rising anxiously*). He said seven, and it's after that.

MAR. (*trying to soothe her*). Not much.

MRS. G. (*pacing about*). Why doesn't he come? (*Stopping short.*) Where do people go to find out if there's been an accident? It's the police station, isn't it?

MAR. Oh, there's no need——

[PETER GARSIDE *bursts in through centre door and closes it behind him as he speaks. He is* 23, *clean-shaven, fair, sturdily built, with a large, loose mouth, strong jaw, and square face, dressed in a cheap tweed suit, wearing a red tie.*

PETER (*breathlessly*). I've done it.

MRS. G. (*going to him; he puts his arm round her and pats her back, while she hides her face against his chest*). My boy, my boy!

PETER. I've done it, mother. (*Looking proudly at* MARGARET.) I'm an honours man of Midlandton University.

MAR. First class, Peter?

PETER. Yes. First Class. (*Gently disengaging himself from* MRS. GARSIDE.)

MRS. G. (*standing by his left, looking up at him*). I knew, I knew it, Peter. I had the faith in you.

PETER (*hanging his cap behind the door right, then coming back to centre.* MARGARET *is standing on the hearthrug*). Ah, little mother, what a help that faith has been to me. I couldn't disappoint a faith like yours. I had to win. Mother, Margaret, I've done it. Done it. Oh, I think I'm not quite sane to-night. This room seems small all of a sudden. I want to leap, to dance, and I know I'd break my neck against the ceiling if I did. Peter Garside, B.A. (*Approaching* MARGARET.) Margaret, tell me I deserve it. *You* know what it means to me. The height of my ambition. The crown, the goal, my target reached at last. Margaret, isn't it a great thing that I've done?

MAR. (*taking both his hands*). A great thing, Peter.

PETER. Oh, but I was lucky in my papers.

MAR. No, you just deserve it all.

PETER (*dropping her hands*). Up to the end I didn't know. I thought I'd failed. And here I'm through first class. I've beaten men I never hoped to equal. I've

called myself a swollen-headed fool for dreaming to compete with them, and now——

MRS. G. Now you've justified my faith. I never doubted you—like Margaret did.

PETER (*looking from her to* MARGARET). Margaret did ?

MAR. I didn't dare to hope for this, Peter—at a first attempt.

MRS. G. (*contemptuously*). She didn't dare. But I did. I dared, Peter, I knew.

PETER (*putting his arm over her shoulder*). Oh, mother, mother ! But Margaret was right, if I hadn't had such luck in the papers I——

MRS. G. (*slipping from him and going to where her cape and bonnet hang on the door right*). It wasn't luck. Even Margaret said you deserved it all.

PETER. Even Margaret ! (*Seeing her putting cape on.*) You're not going out, mother ?

MRS. G. (*with determination*). Yes, I am. There's others besides Margaret doubted you. I'm going to tell them all. I'm going to be the first to spread the news. And won't it spread ! Like murder.

[MARGARET *sits* L.C.

PETER. Oh, yes. It'll spread fast enough. They may know already.

MRS. G. (*turning with her hand on the centre door latch*). How could they ?

PETER. News travels fast.

MRS. G. But you haven't told anyone else. Have you, Peter ? (*Reproachfully.*) You said you'd let me be the first to know.

PETER. I met O'Callagan on his way to the Club. He asked me. I couldn't refuse to answer.

MRS. G. (*energetically*). He'd no right to meet you. A dreamy wastrel like O'Callagan to know before your mother !

PETER. He'll only tell the men at the Club, mother.

MRS. G. (*opening door*). And I'll tell the women. They're

going to know the kind of son I've borne. I'm a proud woman this night, and all Belinda Street is going to know I've cause to be. (*Sniffing.*) O'Callagan indeed!

[*Exit* MRS. GARSIDE.

PETER. And now, Margaret? (*He stands centre behind table.*)

MAR. (*looking up and holding out her hand across table; she takes his, bending*). Oh, my dear, my dear.

PETER. Are you pleased with me?

MAR. Pleased!

PETER (*rising*). Yes. We've done it.

MAR. You, not we. My hero.

PETER. We, Margaret, we. I'm no hero. I owe it all to you.

MAR. (*rising*). You owe it to yourself.

PETER. You inspired me. You helped me on. You kept me at it when my courage failed. When I wanted to slack you came and worked with me. It was your idea from the first.

MAR. My idea but your deed.

PETER (*sitting centre, behind table*). I've had dreams of this. Dreams of success. I never thought it would come. It was there on the horizon—a far-off nebulous dream.

MAR. (*standing right*). It's a reality to-day.

PETER. Yes. It's a reality to day. I've done the task you set me. I've proved my class as good as theirs. That's what you wanted, wasn't it?

MAR. I wanted you to win, Peter.

PETER. I've won because you wanted it, because after I won I knew that you—— (*Rising.*) Has it been wearisome to wait, Margaret? I had the work, lectures, study. You had the tedious days of teaching idiotic middle-class facts to idiotic middle-class children, and evenings when you ought to have had me and didn't because I couldn't lose a single precious moment's chance of study.

MAR. That's clean forgotten. To-night is worth it all.

PETER. To-night, and the future, Margaret.

MAR. (*solemnly*). Yes, the future, Peter.

PETER. This night was always in my dreams. The night when I should come to you and say, Margaret Shawcross, this have I done for you, because you wanted it. Was it well done, Margaret ?

MAR. Nobly done.

PETER. And the labourer is worthy of his hire ? I ask for my reward.

MAR. (*shaking her head*). I can give you no reward that's big enough.

PETER. You can give the greatest prize on earth. We ought to have been married long ago. I've kept you waiting.

MAR. That had to be. They won't have married women teachers at the Midlandton High School. I couldn't burden you until this fight was fought.

PETER. And now, Margaret ?

MAR. Now I'm ready—if——

PETER. More if's ?

MAR. A very little one. If you've money to keep us three. No going short for mother.

PETER. You trust me, don't you ?

MAR. (*giving hand*). Yes, Peter, I trust you.

PETER (*bursting with thoughts*). There's my journalism. This degree 'ull give me a lift at that. I shall get lecture engagements too.

MAR. (*alarmed*). Peter, you didn't do it for that !

PETER. I did it for you. But I mean to enjoy the fruits of all this work. Public speaking's always been a joy to me. You don't know the glorious sensation of holding a crowd in the hollow of your hand, mastering it, doing what you like with it.

MAR. (*sadly*). I hoped you'd given up speaking.

PETER. I haven't spoken lately because I'd other things to do. I haven't given it up.

MAR. You did too much before.

PETER. You don't know the fascination of the thing.

MAR. (*bracing herself for a tussle*). I know the fascination's fatal. I saw it growing on you—this desire to speak, to be the master of a mob. I hoped I'd cured you of it.

PETER. Cured me ?

MAR. I thought I'd given you a higher aim.

PETER. And *that* was why you urged this study on me ?

MAR. Yes.

PETER. Margaret ! Why ? (*Backing from her, and sitting centre during her speech.*)

MAR. I've seen men ruined by this itch to speak. You know them. Men we had great hopes of in the movement. Men we thought would be real leaders of the people. And they spoke, and spoke, and soon said all they had to say, became mere windbags trading on a reputation till people tired and turned to some new orator. Don't be one of these, Peter. You've solider grit than they. The itch to speak is like the itch to drink, except that it's cheaper to talk yourself tipsy.

PETER. You ask a great thing of me, Margaret.

MAR. (*sitting right*). What shall I see of you if you're out speaking every night ? You pitied me just now because you had to close your door against me while you studied. I could bear that for the time. But this other thing, married and widowed at once, with you out at your work all day and away night after night——

PETER. But I shan't always be working in the daytime.

MAR. (*alarmed*). Not work ! Peter—they haven't dismissed you ?

PETER. Oh, no. I'm safe if anyone is safe. No one is, of course, but I'm as safe as man can be. I'm a first-class workman.

MAR. I know that, dear.

PETER. So do they. They'll not sack me. I might sack them some day.

MAR. But—how shall we live ?

PETER (*impatiently*). Oh, not yet. I'm speaking of the future. Don't you see ? I'm not content to be a workman all my life. I ought to make a living easily by writing and—and speaking if you'll let me. Then I could be with you all day long.

MAR. (*looking straight in front of her*). Have I set fire to this train ?

PETER. You don't suppose a B.A. means to stick to manual labour all his life, do you ?

MAR. Oh, dear ! This wasn't my idea at all. I wanted you to win your degree for the honour of the thing, to show them what a working engineer could do. Cease to be a workman and you confess another, worse motive. It's as though you only passed to make a profit for yourself.

PETER. I can't help being ambitious. I wasn't till you set me on.

MAR. If you listened to me then, listen to me now.

PETER (*pushing his chair back and rising*). I might have a career. (*Crossing to fireplace.*)

MAR (*still sitting*). And I might have a husband. I don't want to marry a career, Peter.

PETER (*looking into fire, his back to* MARGARET). I've already got a local reputation as a speaker.

MAR. Then make one as a writer. I know you can.

PETER. The other's easier.

MAR. It's not like you to choose the easy path.

PETER. I've worked so hard. I did think that now I might have some reward.

MAR. You've won your degree.

PETER (*acquiescent*). Oh, yes.

MAR. And—I'm ready, Peter. (*Slight pause.*)

PETER (*turning*). Yes. You've conquered me. I'll fight ambition down. It shall be as you wish, Margaret.

MAR. (*rising and going to him*). Peter, oh, my dear,

dear Peter! You make me feel I don't do right. Oh, but I know. I know. Speaking's so deadly dangerous.

PETER. I promise not to speak. I'll write. I'll stick to engineering, and we'll have our evenings.

MAR. You make me very happy, Peter.

PETER. When are you going to make me happy, Margaret?

MAR. As soon as my lord pleases.

PETER. Your lord will be pleased in a month.

MRS. GARSIDE *enters, centre.*

Well, little mother, have you disseminated the intelligence?

[MARGARET *sits on rocking-chair.*

MRS. G. (*uncomprehendingly*). No. I've been telling folks about you. (*She takes off bonnet and cape and hangs them on door right.*) Some of 'em's green with jealousy this night. They know I'm the mother of a great man now.

PETER. So you were first, after all?

MRS. G. I meant being first. Who'd the better right to be? Me or a wild Irishman? (*Crossing to dresser and emptying on a plate the contents of a parcel she had brought in.*)

PETER (*smiling*). And you've been killing the fatted calf for me?

MRS. G. (*literally*). Oh, did you want pressed veal? I've got ham.

PETER. I don't want veal. Food's not a bad idea, though.

MRS. G. (*looking at* MARGARET). No. Margaret might have thought of that and put the kettle on if she'd had her wits about her.

MAR. (*rising*). I'm sorry, Mrs. Garside. We've been talking.

MRS. G. You'd some excuse. Peter's given us something to talk about.

MAR. Let me help now.

PETER. We'll all help. I'll lay the table.

MRS. G. You don't stir a finger, my lad. Sit you down.

[PETER *sits with amused resignation in rocking-chair.*

PETER. Oh! Why?

MRS. G. B.A.s don't lay tables. Now, Margaret. (MRS. GARSIDE *takes white cloth from drawer in table and she and* MARGARET *spread it. There is a knock at the door.* PETER *gets up.* MRS. GARSIDE *pushes him back into his chair*). I've told you to sit still. (*She crosses to door centre and opens it.*)

O'CAL. (*visible in doorway*). May we come in, Mrs. Garside?

MRS. G. (*genially*). Yes. Come in, the lot of you.

[*The three who enter are working men in their evening clothes.* DENIS O'CALLAGAN *is* 35, *clean shaven, an enthusiastic impractical Irishman, small and dark.* KARL MARX JONES *is* 30, *wears a formally trimmed beard, is precise in utterance, doctrinaire in outlook, and practical in procedure.* NED APPLEGARTH *is a man of* 50, *his age carrying sober authority, very earnest in manner, grizzled moustache, grey hair, black cut-away coat and turn-down collar, a responsible leader deferred to willingly by O'Callagan, ungraciously by Jones.* NED, *entering last, closes the door. Each, as he speaks, shakes* PETER'S *hand.*

O'CAL. (*visible in doorway*). Aye. Let us come in, for it's a great night surely, and we fair bursting with the glory of the thing that's done this day.

JONES. Comrade Garside, I offer my congratulations.

NED. Well done, youngster. (*Turning to* MRS. GARSIDE.) Mrs. Garside, you've a son to be proud of.

MRS. G. Do you think I don't know it?

PETER (*his demeanour unfeignedly modest*). Comrades, Mr. Applegarth, it's nothing. I tried my best, but if I hadn't been so lucky in my papers——

JONES (*interrupting*). You've passed. The others were lucky, lucky in being men of leisure, sons of wealthy parents with nothing to do but study. Don't talk about your luck—(*bitterly*)—the luck of a wage slave. It's like winning a foot race with your ankles chained together.

O'CAL. It's the mighty brain of him that made him win.

PETER. Comrades, don't give me praise. It wasn't I. Something not myself got hold of me and urged me on. Injustice! Tyranny! The consciousness of class. The knowledge that in the eyes of my well-to-do competitors I was an inferior animal. My hands are rough with toil, the toil they batten on, and so they mocked at me for daring to compete with them—a man with a trade. They know now what a working man can do with his brain. They laughed on the wrong side of their fat faces, when the list came out to-night.

O'CAL. Bravo!

JONES (*sceptically*). Are they all such cads? I thought there were Socialists among them.

PETER. Middle-class, kid-glove Socialists, Fabians.

NED (*dryly*). You're a fine talker, lad.

O'CAL. (*to* NED). And a brave doer, Mr. Applegarth.

NED. Well, well, a good start's half the battle, and I'm not denying that a ready tongue's a useful gift.

MAR. It's a dangerous one, Mr. Applegarth.

JONES. Aye, when it's by itself. Not when it's backed up by a knowledge of the principles of Karl Marx and used to expose fearlessly the gross fallacies of the capitalist professors of economics.

NED (*impatiently*). Let's get to business. (JONES *is resentful.*) Mrs. Garside's making supper, and we don't want to keep her waiting.

MRS. G. That's all one. Food 'ull be nobbut a fraud. We're too excited to eat this night. Sit you down.

NED. Thank you, Mrs. Garside.

[MRS. GARSIDE *puts* NED *in chair, centre.* PETER *and* MARGARET *bring the chairs right down stage, putting one right, near table, the other left,* JONES *sits right.* O'CALLAGAN *at table left,* PETER *on chair he brings left of* O'CALLAGAN, *and* MRS. GARSIDE *presently takes rocking-chair.* MARGARET *stands* L.C. *well away from the rest, as if trying to efface herself, after going off left and returning without her hat in a moment.*

(*Sitting.*) Peter, I've said it before, and I say it again. You've made a good start, lad.

PETER. Thank you, Mr. Applegarth.

NED. A good start. And now, what comes next?

PETER (*going left, and meeting* MARGARET *as she re-enters*). Next? This next, Mr. Applegarth. (*Taking her hand.*)

NED (*nodding*). So. I mind I'd heard. Well, marriage is a proper state. (JONES *shows signs of irritation.*) And you're a lucky chap to have Miss Shawcross for a bride. I don't say anything against marriage.

JONES (*hotly*). Well, I do. Now and always. In a free state marriage——

O'CAL. (*leaning across towards* JONES, PETER *and* MARGARET *still standing behind near left door*). And have we got our free state yet? Let you wait to be talking of freedom and free-loving men and women till we've had our glorious revolution, and in the dawning of that day——

JONES (*leaping up, interrupting*). There must be pioneers. Some of *us* must set the example. (*Appealing to* PETER *and* MARGARET.) Even at the price of martyrdom, of ostracism by coarse-minded oafs who cannot understand, I call on you, Miss Shawcross, to dispense with the worn-out form of marriage. Be free lovers——

NED. Comrade Jones, you're a married man yourself

(JONES *sits down abruptly, silenced*), and we're here on business. And after you're married, Peter ?

JONES (*murmuring disgustedly*). Married !

PETER (*lightly*). Oh, live happily ever afterwards. My horizon doesn't go beyond that.

NED. Doesn't it ? Well, listen to me. There'll be a by-election here shortly.

PETER. Why ? (PETER *leaves* MARGARET *and comes forward to chair right of table.*)

NED. Ramsden's resigning South-west Midlandton.

JONES. About time the old hypocrite did, too.

PETER. This is news to me.

NED. I know that. It was news to us last night. The question is, do we run a candidate this time ?

PETER. We ought to. It's a labour seat by rights.

JONES. If only the thick-headed fools would see their own interests.

PETER (*turning*). Margaret, you'll have to give me back my word. (*Slight pause.*)

JONES. What word's that ?

PETER. I've promised to give up public speaking. (*They look at* MARGARET *in disgusted protest. She speaks quickly.*)

MAR. Oh, you shall speak if there's an election.

NED. That's right. All hands to the pump.

MAR. I'll speak myself.

O'CAL. It's a risky thing for you, Miss Shawcross.

MAR. The cause comes first.

O'CAL. Before bread and butter ? You'll lose your job if they hear of it.

MAR. I must hope they won't hear.

NED. You're going too fast. There's two things in the way. One's money. The other's a man.

PETER. Surely the Central people have a good man ready to fight.

NED. No. We've got to find the man, before they help us with money. They're a bit down on our chances

unless we find a strong local man. A local man should pull it off where an outsider might fail. Problem is to find him.

O'CAL. Faith, and we've found him.

PETER. Yourself, Mr. Applegarth ?

NED. I'm the wrong side of fifty, and I'm no speaker. Guess again.

PETER. It's got to be a local man ?

JONES. That's essential.

PETER. I can't think of anyone who's big enough for that job.

JONES. Nor we couldn't neither. We gave it up last night and called another meeting at the Club to-night. And there we sat, the whole executive, no better than a parcel of tongue-tied fools, when O'Callagan bursts in and tells us——

NED. Yes, Peter Garside, B.A., there's you.

[MARGARET *shrinks back still further.*

MRS. G. (*going round to him*). Peter ! My son a Member of Parliament !

PETER (*repulsing her*). No, no, I'm not worthy.

NED. We're the best judges of that.

PETER (*firmly*). I'm too young. I'd be the youngest man in the Labour Party.

JONES. Someone's got to be that. They need young blood. There's too much antideluvian trades unionism about the old gang.

O'CAL. It's a queer thing you do be saying, and you without a grey hair to your head. It's a queer thing to hear a young man making moan because he's young.

MRS. G. (*appealingly*). Peter !

PETER. But I'm—— (*Hesitating and looking from one to the other.*)

NED. What ?

PETER. I don't know. I never thought of this.

JONES. Think of it now. We've to act sharp if we're to do any good at all.

PETER (*still wondering*). And you've come officially to offer it to me ?

JONES (*roughly*). Of course we have. Do you think we're playing with the thing ?

PETER. It's—it's awfully sudden. When do you want my answer ?

NED. Now. (*Seeing* PETER's *distress, more kindly.*) To-night, anyhow. The whole thing 'ull be over in six weeks. We've little enough time in all conscience to create an organization.

PETER. And if I say—no ?

O'CAL. Then one of the murdering blood-suckers that live upon our labour 'ull get the seat, and it won't matter either way which side wins, for it's all one to the working man.

JONES. It's you or nobody.

NED (*appealing*). Lad, you'll not say no. I don't say you'll never get another chance, because B.A.s are sort of scarce in the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. But I do say this. We want you. You've got a call to a high place and a high duty. Are you going to fail us in our need ?

O'CAL. We want you for another nail in the coffin of capitalism, another link in the golden chain that's dragging us up from slavery the way we'll be free men the day that chain's complete.

PETER (*smiling*). And I'd be a nine-carat link, Denis. I'm made of baser stuff than the great leaders who compose that chain. I'm not worthy to aspire to a seat by their side in Parliament.

JONES. There's such a vice as over-modesty.

NED. Nay, I like you better for being modest. You'd like us to go out and come back in an hour or so.

MRS. G. Say yes to them, Peter. Tell them you'll be a Member of Parliament.

PETER. Members of Parliament need electing first, mother.

O'CAL. And are you doubting that you'll be elected? You've only to say you'll stand, and you can practise putting M.P. after your name this night, for you'll have need to write it certainly.

PETER (*going to* MARGARET). Margaret, what shall I say?

JONES. You must decide this for yourself.

MAR. (*coming forward a little reluctantly*). Yes, Peter. You must decide. No one can help you there.

PETER. Won't you tell me what you think?

MAR. (*firmly*). Not now. No other mind than yours can make this choice.

PETER (*adrift*). But, Margaret, you've always given me advice.

MRS. G. (*jealously*). She wants to hold you back. She's never had the faith in you that others have. She'd like to tell you now you're not good enough for Parliament only there's too many here to give her the lie.

PETER. Mother, mother!

MRS. G. Oh, yes, I dare say, put Margaret first, Margaret who doesn't believe in you, in front of all the rest of us who know Parliament's not good enough for you. It's the House of Lords you should be in.

PETER. I hope not so bad as that, mother.

O'CAL. We'll be taking a stroll round the houses, and come in again presently.

PETER (*turning to them*). No. Don't go. I'll give you my answer now. I've decided.

NED. Well. What is it?

PETER. I'll stand.

NED. (*shaking his hand*). Good lad!

O'CAL. It's destroyed I am with joy, and me after thinking he wasn't going to stand at all. You'll be elected surely, and we the nearer by another step to that great glittering dawn that's coming to bring peace and happiness to——

JONES. Don't gabble, Denis. We've to work to

organize for victory. I'm going to the Club to beat up recruits.

NED. We're all coming, Karl. We're not going into this with our hands in our pockets.

PETER (*making for his cap*). Yes.

NED (*stopping him*). Not you, Peter. You've earned a rest to-night. You begin to-morrow.

PETER. Rest! I shan't rest till after the election.

JONES. You've to keep your strength for the street corners. We'll do the donkey work. Clerking's all some of us are fit for. (*Glancing at* O'CALLAGAN.) You can draft your election address if you want something to do.

NED. You'll want every ounce of strength. Ramsden's done us a good turn by resigning in the summer time. They can have every hall in the town and welcome. But open-air speaking night after night—well, look to your lungs. We'll watch the rest.

PETER. I'm in your hands.

NED. That's right. Take it easy now. You'll have to sprint at the finish. Now, comrades. (*Opening door, centre.*)

O'CAL. Good night, all.

JONES. Good night.

[PETER *holds door open and sees them go, he,* MARGARET, *and* MRS. GARSIDE *chorussing* "*Good night,*" *then he closes the door, and leans against it as if dazed, passing his hand across his forehead.*

PETER. My God! It's like a dream. I can't get used to it.

MRS. G. You'll get used to it fast enough. It's always an easy thing to take your natural state in life. You were born to be great. (*Viciously.*) However much some folk 'ud like to keep you down.

PETER. Yes. I suppose I shall settle to it. (*Coming to chair right and sitting,* MRS. GARSIDE *is to his left,* MARGARET *his right.*) In a few days it'll seem matter of

fact enough to be Labour candidate for the division. But it hasn't got me that way yet. Margaret, when you set me on to study for my B.A., you little thought it was going to lead to this.

MAR. (*slowly*). No. I didn't think it would lead to this.

MRS. G. (*sharply*). And you're not well pleased it has. Some people can't stand the sight of other folk's success.

PETER (*protesting*). Mother, mother, without Margaret this would never have happened to me. I owe it all to her.

MRS. G. (*sceptically*). Because she told you to study? It's a proper easy job to tell someone else to do a thing. A fine lot easier than doing it yourself.

PETER. Come, mother, I can't have you quarrelling with Margaret.

MRS. G. (*sulkily*). What does she want to go and discourage you for?

PETER. She didn't discourage me.

MRS. G. She wouldn't say a word for it.

PETER. She will now. Won't you, Margaret?

MAR. What do you want me to say?

PETER (*surprised*). Say what you want.

MAR. Then I say this: Go on and prosper.

PETER (*relieved*). Ah! You couldn't wish me anything but well. You see, mother?

MRS. G. (*grimly*). Yes, but you don't.

PETER. Don't what?

MRS. G. You don't see what she means.

PETER (*confidently smiling at* MARGARET). Oh, Margaret means what she says.

MRS. G. And more. She doesn't want you to go into Parliament.

PETER (*puzzled, looking at* MARGARET). Doesn't what——? (*Slightly pausing.*) Speak, Margaret.

MAR. No. I don't want you to go into Parliament.

MRS. G. (*triumphantly*). What did I tell you ?

PETER. But Margaret, why not ? Don't you see what a chance it is ? Take it, and I go up, up, Fortune, Fame, anything—the prospects are tremendous. Miss it, and I sink back to obscurity. You can't want me to miss a chance like that.

MAR. I wanted to be married to you.

MRS. G. That's it, Peter. That's your Margaret all over. All she cares about is herself.

PETER (*ignoring her—to* MARGARET). Nothing's going to interfere with that. Nothing on earth. You needn't fear. We're to be married in a month. Exactly as we fixed just now. A month ? It'll come in the thick of the fight.

MAR. We can't be married while the election's on.

PETER (*thinking aloud, enthusiastically*). Oh, but we must. We must. I hadn't thought of that. Weddings are always popular. See what an advertisement it will be.

MAR. (*quietly*). We won't use our love to advertise your candidature, Peter.

MRS. G. To hear you talk, it might be something you're ashamed of.

PETER. It's throwing away a golden opportunity.

MAR. I'm sorry, Peter. But I can't do that.

MRS. G. Won't, you mean. You want to see him defeated.

MAR. (*with quiet force*). I shall work till I drop to help him on to victory.

MRS. G. You'll help best by doing what he asks.

PETER. I really think you might, Margaret. It's not a new plan. I'm only asking you to carry out the arrangement you made this very evening. You didn't object then, I can't see what your scruple is now.

MAR. If you can't see for yourself that it's vulgar and hideous and horrible to drag our love into the glare of an election, I'm afraid I can't help you to see it.

PETER. I don't see it. Love's not a hole-and-corner business. Why shouldn't everybody know?

MAR. All who matter know already.

PETER. Only our own circle.

MAR. It doesn't concern the rest.

PETER (*arguing hotly*). Except as an advertisement. We shan't have too much money to spend on printers' bills. We can't buy hoardings like the capitalist parties. And here's a glorious advertisement simply going begging. We can have it at the cost of your forgetting some imaginary scruple of delicacy. Elections aren't delicate affairs.

MAR. No. But our love is.

MRS. G. If your love's so finicky it can't stand daylight, it's not worth much. A love like that 'ull not last long.

PETER. You're right there, mother.

MRS. G. (*eagerly*). She wants to hold you back, she'd like to see you tied to engineering all your life. For why? She's wild because you're going up in the world. She knows she's not fit to go up with you, so she's trying to keep you where you are. That's why she refuses to help.

MAR. I don't refuse to help. I'm going to help.

PETER. Yes, anything except the only way that's helpful. I don't want other help.

MAR. You can't go without it. You can't stop me working for the cause.

MRS. G. Yes, and you'd work harder for any other candidate than Peter. I know you.

MAR. Not harder, but certainly with a better will.

PETER (*soberly*). Margaret, you're standing in my way. Oh, I owe a lot to you. I don't forget it. But . . . But a man has to rely on his own judgment. If I took your advice, I'd wreck my career. You've always underrated me. You thought I wouldn't get my degree. I did get my degree. And I'll prove you wrong again. I'll be M.P. before six weeks are out.

MAR. I say again: Go on and prosper.

MRS. G. And she means you can prosper without her, and a good riddance too, I say.

PETER. Do you mean that, Margaret?

MAR. I think we'll wait a little, Peter. You've other things to think of now.

PETER. You said that when I started studying.

MAR. I say it again now when you're starting electioneering.

PETER (*losing temper*). And after that there'll be something else and something after that, and so on, till Doomsday 'ull see us still unmarried. I begin to think you never mean to marry me.

MRS. G. It's about time you did begin to think it, too.

MAR. (*suffering*). Oh, Peter, why won't you understand?

PETER. Because you're not reasonable. (*Slight pause.*) Tell me this. Do you think I'm not fit for Parliament?

MAR. (*painfully*). Yes, dear. I do.

PETER (*roughly*). Don't call me dear. If that's the way you talk, you're not dear to me.

MRS. G. I've seen it for long enough—her thinking meanly of you and the rest of us knowing different, and you for ever hearkening to her as if she was Almighty God.

MAR. (*facing* MRS. GARSIDE). I won't stand this.

MRS. G. You've got to. You're shown up now.

PETER. This means you've no faith in me, Margaret. And if you've no faith, you've no love——

MAR. (*despairingly*). Peter, you mustn't say such things.

MRS. G. You can't get away from the truth, my girl.

PETER. I say them because they're true. It's for you to prove me wrong.

MAR. How? Tell me how?

PETER. Marry me in the month as we arranged, and I'll go down on my knees and ask your pardon.

MAR. I can't marry you in a month.

PETER. Then it's true. You don't love me. You don't believe in me.

MAR. I—I think I'll go home.

[*Exit* MARGARET *right, returning quickly with her hat, which she puts on.* PETER *watches her go and meets her as she returns.*

PETER (*appealingly*). Margaret!

MAR. No, Peter. I can't do it.

PETER (*acquiescing*). Then—good-bye.

MAR. I shall see you often at the Committee Rooms. Don't tell me I mustn't work for you.

PETER. If it was only for myself I wouldn't have your help at any price. But, as you told us, you'll not be work- for me but for the cause. (*Grandiloquently.*) In the name of the cause I accept your help.

MAR. (*simply*). Thank you, Peter. I shall work hard. Good night, Mrs. Garside.

[MRS. GARSIDE *makes no sign.* PETER *moves towards* MARGARET, *checks himself, and she goes out.*

MRS. G. That's a good job done.

PETER. Don't talk about it, mother, please.

MRS. G. You can look higher than a school marm now you're going into Parliament.

PETER (*distressed*). Please, please!

MRS. G. (*cheerfully*). Oh, well, we'll have supper and chance it.

PETER. Have yours. I only want this end of the table. (*Collecting paper, ink, and pen and sitting at right end of table.*) I must do something to forget.

MRS. G. What are you doing?

PETER. Drafting my address. Hand me down that dictionary, will you? (*Indicating hanging shelf.*)

MRS. G. (*getting large dictionary from shelf and putting on table near him.*) You don't want a dictionary. It's all there in that brain of yours.

PETER. A dictionary's useful. People like to read long words. It looks erudite, and costs nothing.

MRS. G. They'll never understand dictionary words, Peter. (*Poking fire.*)

PETER. That doesn't matter. They'll be impressed. (*Dipping pen and bending.*) Don't disturb me while I write.

CURTAIN.

ACT II

Ornate drawing-room in SIR JASPER MOTTRAM'S *house. Centre is a large window giving access to a balcony. It is, however, evening, and the drawn curtains conceal the balcony. Door left. Light wall colouring and carpet. Fireplace right. No fire. Chesterfield right centre. Light arm-chairs left and left centre. Japanese screen before fireplace. Large Japanese jar in left corner.*

GLADYS MOTTRAM *is sitting on the Chesterfield reading a novel. She is in evening dress, a pretty, flirtatious, empty-headed girl, bored with her daily life and seizing eagerly on any distraction.* FREDDIE MOTTRAM, *her brother, is* 30, *and conceals real kindness behind his flippant manner. He doesn't go deep and he likes money, but he is on good terms with the world and doesn't mind a little trouble or even unconventionality to put the world on good terms with him. He is fair, with fair moustache, and his figure is that of the ex-athlete who could still give a good account of himself. He leans back in the arm-chair, yawning and consulting his watch, glancing at* GLADYS, *entrenched behind her book, again yawning and making up his mind to address her.*

FRED. (*nursing a grievance*). I say, Gladys, how much longer do you expect me to wait ?

GLAD. (*looking up from her book, calmly*). Till Mr. Garside goes.

FRED. And he hasn't come yet. Just when I particularly want to go out, too. It's all very well for the governor to be civil to him. He's got to. But I do bar doing the honours myself to a horny-handed son of toil.

GLAD. (*putting her book beside her, face downwards. With an air of resignation*). You don't particularly want to go out. You're only going to the Club.

FRED. (*seriously*). But I particularly want to go to the Club.

GLAD. You go every night.

FRED. Every night isn't my lucky night. Thursday is. I always win on Thursdays. The governor ought to do his own dirty work. He's Mayor, not I. Cutting his duty, I call it, being away to-night just when I'm bound to make money.

GLAD. He'll be here when he's ready. He's going to be late on purpose.

FRED. Very much on purpose. Yes. There you've got it. He had Rankin and Beverley here to dinner together. Quite right, too. Rankin's a Radical rotter, but he's a gentleman. When it comes to Garside the governor shirks and leaves it to us. Why on earth he wants to ask a Labour candidate here at all simply floors me.

GLAD. He has to treat them all alike.

FRED. Then he should have had Garside to dinner, and given us some sport over the asparagus.

GLAD. That wasn't necessary.

FRED. And this isn't necessary. Rankin and Beverley, by all means. They're probables. But why waste time on an outsider like Garside? It'll only swell his head to be our guest.

GLAD. He isn't an outsider.

FRED. You don't say the governor's taking him seriously.

GLAD. He's taking him very seriously.

FRED (*horrified*). Oh, I say. No. It's absurd.

GLAD. Garside's making headway fast. He's a fine speaker, and he's popular.

FRED. A mechanic a fine speaker! Rot! Who says so?

GLAD. I for one. I've heard him.

FRED. You have! It's a quaint taste.

GLAD. More than once.

FRED. (*sarcastically*). Making a hobby of it? (*Seriously.*) Where?

GLAD. In the street.

FRED. (*genuinely shocked*). You've been listening to a tub-thumper at street corners? I say, hang it, Gladys, there are things people don't do.

GLAD. The first time was an accident.

FRED. The second was a crime.

GLAD. (*rising, and speaking enthusiastically*). I went again because I admired the man. I liked to hear that ringing voice, to be one of that wild enthusiastic crowd bewitched by the spell of his personality. He saw me too. I stood at the back of the crowd, but he saw me and he spoke for me . . for me. Our eyes met, and I know he spoke for me alone.

FRED. (*sitting and leaning back, fanning his face*). Why didn't you warn me? I didn't know I was to meet my future brother-in-law to-night.

GLAD. Don't be absurd, Freddie. (*Sitting again.*) It's because he's doing so well that father asked him here, and we've to keep him as long as possible.

FRED. (*looking at watch*). My ducats, oh, my ducats! Why?

GLAD. Because every moment that he's prevented from speaking is a loss to him and a gain to us. As Mayor, father's supposed to be neutral, at the election, so that gives him an excuse to entertain Garside and spoil his speaking for one night, anyhow.

FRED. That's a bit tricky.

GLAD. All's fair in war.

FRED. And love, Gladys, and love.

GLAD. Don't be sillier than you can help.

FRED. Besides, they'll have others to keep the ball rolling while he's here.

GLAD. There's a firebrand of a woman speaking every night who's about as popular as he is.

FRED. (*interested*). A woman ? Is she good-looking ?

GLAD. I don't know.

FRED. You wouldn't. You'd only eyes for him.

GLAD. She doesn't speak on the same platforms with him.

FRED. Don't blame her, either. Only one star turn to each show, eh ?

GLAD. Anyhow, father's instructions are to keep Garside here till he comes home, if we can.

FRED. All right. Tell Timson to lock him up in the pantry and keep him there till the election's over.

GLAD. Afraid that's too crude, Freddie. I'll do my best to hold him for to-night.

FRED. Oh ? Be careful. Flirtation's a risky game even when both sides know the rules. It's always apt to end in marriage ; and that chap won't know the rules. Much better lock him up.

GLAD. Kidnapping's out of date.

FRED. Oh, you want him to get in. He's fascinated you.

GLAD. (*tartly*). That's doubtless why I've been canvassing for Mr. Beverley all day, while you've been watching a cricket match.

FRED. Hang it, Glad, someone's got to support county cricket. I did a jolly plucky thing to-day. Wore old Beverley's colours and nearly got mobbed in the bar by a beastly gang of Radicals.

GLAD. You shouldn't go into bars.

FRED. And you shouldn't hang about street corners with a set of Socialists. Serve you right if you'd got your pocket picked. I'd rather be an open drinker than a secret revolutionist any day.

[*Enter* LADY MOTTRAM. *She is white-haired and authoritative in manner, dressed in a high evening gown, too freely jewelled.* FREDDIE *rises.*

FRED. Hullo, mater. Any luck ?

LADY M. If you mean by that expression has Mr. Garside arrived, he has not. (*Crosses to Chesterfield.*)

FRED. (*looking at watch*). Well, he may be an upright youth, but punctuality isn't amongst his virtues.

LADY M. (*standing by Chesterfield*). It's just as well. I have a disagreeable duty to perform. (*Sitting, very dignified.*)

FRED. (*lightly*). Hope it'll keep fine for you.

LADY M. Ring the bell, Freddie. (FREDDIE *crosses to fireplace and rings.*) Thank you.

FRED. By Jove, Gladys, someone's going to catch it. Mark that awe-inspiring frown. I'm getting frit.

Enter TIMSON.

LADY M. Show the young person in here, Timson.

TIMSON. Yes, my lady.

[*Exit* TIMSON. FREDDIE *is following with exaggerated fear.*

LADY M. Don't go, Freddie.

FRED. Oh, but I do hate thunderstorms when I've no umbrella.

LADY M. I want to be certain you're here when Mr. Garside comes.

FRED. Mayn't a man have a cigarette ? I'll come back. (TIMSON *opens door as* FREDDIE *comes to it. Looking off* FREDDIE *sees* MARGARET, *and stops short.*) By Jove, I'll stay.

TIMSON (*with marked disapproval*). Miss Shawcross.

[*Enter* MARGARET *dressed as* ACT I, *with the addition of a light coat, without gloves.* LADY M. *and* GLADYS *remain seated.* FRED. *stands right, well behind the Chesterfield.* MARGARET *stands left, in some confusion. Exit* TIMSON.

MAR. You . . . I understand you want to see me, Lady Mottram.

LADY M. (*immensely superior*). Yes. Your name is Shawcross ? Margaret Shawcross ?

MAR. Yes.

LADY M. Fifteen, Rosalie Street ?

MAR. Yes.

LADY M. Ah ! (*With patronising kindliness.*) I've sent for you, Miss Shawcross, to give you a warning—a friendly warning. Er—you may sit down.

MAR. (*sitting stiffly, but not awkwardly, left*). Thank you.

LADY M. You are an assistant-teacher at the Midlandton Girls' High School ?

MAR. I am.

LADY M. You're aware that I am a member of the Governing Board ?

MAR. Yes.

LADY M. (*expansively*). In fact, I may say I have a preponderating influence. Bear that fact in mind, Miss Shawcross. (MARGARET *inclines her head.*) We don't enquire offensively into the conduct of our staff out of school hours. So long as they behave themselves respectably we are satisfied. Does your experience confirm that ?

MAR. Quite.

LADY M. You've suffered no inquisition into your private life ? No interference into your personal affairs ?

MAR. None.

LADY M. (*nodding grimly*). Ah ! Then you'll do us the justice to acknowledge that we don't move except in extreme cases. I regret to say yours is an extreme case, Miss Shawcross.

MAR. (*rising*). Mine !

[FREDDIE's *attitude conveys interest plus pity,* GLADYS's *unrelieved contempt.*

LADY M. (*severely*). Yours. I don't complain of your holding heterodox views. It is a regrettable fact that many young women of to-day hold alarmingly lax opinions. But they keep their views to themselves. They confine them to their own circle. It has been left to you to

proclaim publicly at street corners your loose morality, to——

MAR. You'll pardon me. I've done nothing of the sort.

LADY M. I'm grievously misinformed if you're not a self-confessed Socialist.

MAR. You spoke of loose morality.

LADY M. (*curtly*). Same thing. Do you admit to publicly advocating Socialism ?

MAR. Certainly. You publicly advocate Tariff Reform. Why shouldn't I advocate Socialism ?

LADY M. The cases are hardly parallel. The one is respectable, the other isn't. However, you're not here to argue with me. You have to earn your living. An orphan, I understand.

MAR. Yes.

LADY M. You've the more reason to walk warily. (*Kindly.*) Now, you're young, and you're ignorant, and I'm ready to overlook this. I could have you dismissed at once, but I've no doubt you'll be a good girl after this little talk. Good night, Miss Shawcross.

MAR. Good night, Lady Mottram. (*She moves towards door.* FREDDIE *opens it, she turns back.*) No, I won't go like this. You'd have the right to tell me I deceived you. (FREDDIE *closes door and stands centre.*) I can't take your warning, Lady Mottram. (LADY M. *rises.*) I dare say it's kindly meant. I thank you for that. But as for stopping speaking, working heart and soul for the cause that's all in all to me, I can't do that.

LADY M. Can't ? Won't, you mean. This is defiance, Miss Shawcross. You'd better take care.

MAR. (*splendidly contemptuous*). Care ! Life isn't all taking care.

LADY M. (*calmly*). It's really very rash of you. Your livelihood's at stake. I say nothing about your immortal soul, which is endangered if it's not already lost.

MAR. Suppose you leave my soul out, Lady Mottram.

My employment *is* in your hands. You have the power to take that from me.

LADY M. Persist in your defiance and I shall be compelled to exercise that power.

FRED. (*to* MAR.). Speaking from long and intimate acquaintance with my mother, I should just like to interpolate the remark that she invariably means what she says.

MAR. (*coldly*). Thank you. I haven't worked for Socialism without knowing the risks I took. There's nothing unusual in this. Since Socialism's been the bogey of the employing class, dismissal for Socialists is an everyday occurrence.

LADY M. (*mildly angered*). This is too much. To associate *me* with cowardly employers who abuse their power, when my only object is to secure respectability in our teaching staff.

MAR. Oh, they all do it for excellent motives. How long have I, Lady Mottram ?

LADY M. Till Miss Allinson can replace you.

MAR. Till then I can go on contaminating my pupils ! However, to replace me won't take an hour. Unemployed teachers aren't scarce.

LADY M. (*viciously*). You are dismissed for gross misconduct, and the fact will be stated on any reference you ask for.

FRED. I say, mater, that's a bit rough. (MARGARET *turns to door.* FREDDIE *stands intercepting her.*) Give the girl a chance.

LADY M. Mind your own business, Freddie.

FRED. Hang it, how do you know she won't starve ?

LADY M. Her sort don't starve.

GLAD. She's wearing an engagement ring. Someone's ready to keep her.

MAR. (*quietly*). My engagement's broken off.

LADY M. Then why do you carry a lie on your finger ?

MAR. I hadn't the courage to take it off—till now. (*Putting ring in coat-pocket.*)

FRED. You're in a bit of a hole, you know.

LADY M. Gladys, if Freddie's going to be sympathetic to this young person, you and I had better retire. Conversations between young men and persons of her class are not carried on in the presence of ladies.

[LADY M. and GLADYS *go out*, FREDDIE *opening door.* MARGARET *is following. He closes the door.*

FRED. One moment, Miss Shawcross.

MAR. Let me go, please.

FRED. Yes. I say. I know I'm being assinine. I am rather an ass. But I'm a genial sort of ass, and if there's one thing I can't stand it's one woman being beastly to another. Women are the limit. (*Rapidly, as* MARGARET *shows impatience.*) What I mean is, can I do anything for you ?

MAR. (*curtly*). No, thank you, Mr. Mottram. (*Trying to pass him.*)

FRED. (*with a stronger note of seriousness*). No, you're not going till I let you. The mater's made it hard enough. That's the worst of women. They won't be sportsmen. Mind you, I'm not blaming her. Swop positions and you'd do it yourself. But you've lost your job. That's an idiotic thing to do now. As if any footling politics were worth a tinker's cuss !

MAR. Why are you keeping me here ?

FRED. I'm telling you, aren't I ?

MAR. It wasn't very lucid.

FRED. What are you going to do for a living ?

MAR. That isn't your business, Mr. Mottram.

FRED. (*seriously*). Look here, I'm not a woman eater. I'm a cheerful soul, and I hate to see people in distress. The mater's got you down. Foul blow, too. Hitting below the belt, to sack you without a character. What are you going to do about it, Miss Shawcross ?

MAR. I don't know yet.

FRED. Let me talk to some Johnnie at the Club, and make him take you into his office.

MAR. Why should you? And do you think anybody will have me without a character?

FRED. I'll fix that all right. Only it'll be an office.

MAR. I can typewrite.

FRED. By Jove! What a brainy chap you are.

MAR. I don't know why you're doing this, but I'll work my fingers to the bone if you can get me work where they'll not mind my principles.

FRED. You can be a Particular Baptist, or a Neo-Confucian for all this Johnnie 'ull care.

MAR. Are you sure he's the same man in his office as in his Club?

FRED. Oh, don't wet blanket me. I'm only trying.

MAR. I'm sorry, Mr. Mottram. Your friend will find me a hard worker.

FRED. I say, you won't overdo that part of it, will you?

MAR. What part?

FRED. The working. Bad form to make the pace hotter than the regular rate.

MAR. I thought offices were places for hard work.

FRED. I dare say you're right. I expect that's why the office men I know spend so much time at the Club, out of work's way.

MAR. Mr. Mottram, why are you doing this?

FRED. Oh, I'm a starved creature. Being good keeps me warm.

Enter TIMSON.

TIMSON. Mr. Garside.

[PETER *enters. He has gained considerably in self-confidence, and enters rather defiantly. Exit* TIMSON.

FRED. (*stepping forward*). Good evening, Mr. Garside.

PETER (*seeing* MARGARET, *and seeing red. Ignoring* FRED.). You here!

MAR. Lady Mottram sent for me.

PETER. It's a very suspicious circumstance. I find you here in the enemy's camp, looking confused, guilty. You'd better explain yourself.

FRED. (*offering hand again, emphatically*). Good evening, Mr. Garside. Why's it the enemy's camp, when mayors are neutral at elections ?

PETER (*carelessly, just touching his hand*). Oh, good evening. Sir Jasper is officially neutral, sir. But he is actually chairman of the Employers' Federation, and, as such, our bitterest enemy.

FRED. By the way, you're here yourself, you know.

PETER. I am paying an official visit to the Mayor. It's different with this lady. She works for me—ostentatiously. She's supposed to be addressing a meeting for me at this moment. Instead, I find her here, playing the traitor and betraying me to my political enemies.

FRED. I always thought it wanted a lot of imagination to be a politician. Does yours often bolt like this ?

PETER. That's not very convincing. (*Brushing him aside.*) Excuse me, Mr. Mottram. I must get to the bottom of this. (*To* MARGARET.) What have you to say for yourself ?

MAR. Nothing.

FRED. Quite right, too. Some things are too silly to reply to.

PETER. Then I shall draw my own conclusions.

[PETER *is left,* FREDDIE *centre, and* MARGARET *right.*

FRED. I'd advise you to draw 'em mild. (*Turning to* MARGARET.) This isn't your lucky night, Miss Shawcross.

MAR. It doesn't matter, Mr. Mottram.

FRED. Yes, it does. If you won't tell Mr. Garside why you're here, I will.

MAR. (*appealingly*). Please don't. (*Proudly.*) My personal affairs are no concern of Mr. Garside's.

PETER. And meantime let me tell you, sir, that your ardour to defend the lady only makes bad worse.

FRED. Good Lord! I always said politicians were people who hadn't the brains to be frivolous, but I never knew they were quite so stupid. Why, man——

[*Enter* LADY MOTTRAM *and* GLADYS. FRED *stops abruptly.*

LADY M. (*sweetly*). So pleased you've come, Mr. Garside.

PETER (*quite sure of himself*). Good evening, Lady Mottram.

LADY M. Mr. Garside, my daughter. (GLADYS *meets* PETER'S *eyes and bows; he starts perceptibly.*) So sorry Sir Jasper isn't here to welcome you, but I hope my son's made you feel quite at home.

FRED. We've talked like brothers.

LADY M. (*realising* MARGARET'S *presence*). Miss Shawcross, I think I told you you could go. Will you ring, Freddie?

FRED. I'll see Miss Shawcross out.

[LADY MOTTRAM *shrugs, and turns virtuously away.* FRED. *opens door, and* MARGARET *moves to it.*

PETER (*as she goes past*). Where are you going?

MAR. I'm going to speak. I'm advertised to speak.

PETER. For me?

MAR. (*frigidly*). No, Socialism.

LADY M. (*turning*). Then you will take the consequences.

MAR. (*quietly*). Oh, yes. I'll take the consequences.

[*Exeunt* MARGARET *and* FREDDIE.

LADY M. (*sitting on Chesterfield and motioning* PETER *to sit by her.* GLADYS *sits opposite*). Young men are so susceptible to a pretty face. Don't you think so, Mr. Garside? (*Quickly.*) Oh, but of course you are serious-minded.

PETER (*glancing at* GLADYS). I'm not beauty-proof, Lady Mottram.

LADY M. Ah, but real beauty is so rare.

PETER. That's why it haunts me.

LADY M. Is there a case in point ?

PETER. Yes.

LADY M. (*insincerely*). How romantic ! Do tell us about it, Mr. Garside.

PETER (*eyeing* GLADYS). Shall I ?

GLAD. Do please.

PETER. It is romantic, Lady Mottram. I didn't think such beauty could be earthly. It came upon me just as I stood speaking at a street corner one night, a face on the outskirts of my audience. I was tired and it gave me strength. My voice was failing, but it rang out fresh again to reach those ears. I've seen it many times since then, that angel's face with a halo, always at the fringe of the crowd, always an inspiration, eyes that yearned to mine across the sea of caps and drew my very soul into my words. I thought it was a dream. Could the same clay that moulded me be shaped to this vision ? Until to-night I didn't know such women could exist.

LADY M. (*trying to appear interested*). It's a woman, then.

PETER. Woman or goddess, she's alive. Yes.

LADY M. She'd be flattered if she heard you now.

PETER. I'm not flattering her.

Re-enter FREDDIE.

FRED. I've seen her off the premises.

LADY M. Don't interrupt. Mr. Garside's telling us about a woman with a wonderful face who's been inspiring his speeches.

FRED. (*sitting* R.C.). Oh, yes ? A face that launched a thousand speeches ? Bit of a responsibility for any face.

LADY M. And who is she, Mr. Garside ?

PETER. I didn't know.

GLAD. What a pity. She'll never know what she's been to you.

PETER. I think she knows now, Miss Mottram.

FRED. Fair Unknown inspires your speeches, your

speeches inspire electors, electors elect you, and it'll be Garside, M.P., when it ought to be Fair Unknown, M.P.

PETER. Only the electors haven't elected me yet.

FRED. I hear they're going to.

PETER (*confidently*). It's highly probable.

LADY M. Do you know London, Mr. Garside ?

PETER. No, but I hope to shortly.

FRED. You must let me show you round. You'll feel strange at first.

PETER. I'm not afraid of London. If it's a case of London conquering me or me conquering London I know which will win.

FRED. Going to be one of our conquerors, eh ?

PETER. I mean to try. I've got ambitions.

FRED. Thank God, I haven't. A cosy club and a decent cigar are good enough for me. Please count me conquered in advance. (*Lolling easily in chair.*)

LADY M. But has a Labour member such opportunities of—er—conquering London, Mr. Garside ?

PETER. If he puts them to the right use. Yes—there's money in it.

FRED. (*sitting up, interested*). Money ? I'll be a Labour member. I like money.

PETER. I don't say it's been done up to now. I'm going to do it, though.

FRED. What's the recipe ?

PETER. Oh, you begin by journalism and lecture engagements.

FRED. And that's the royal road to wealth ? Mother, why wasn't I brought up to be a Labour member ! This solves the problem of what shall we do with our sons. Only it's too like work for me.

GLAD. Freddie, don't chaff Mr. Garside. He isn't one of your frivolous Club companions.

PETER. Oh, I haven't been through the half of an election campaign without toughening my epidermis, Miss Mottram. I'm not afraid of ridicule.

FRED. You'll go far, Mr. Garside. The secret of success is to have no sense of humour.

GLAD. A lot you know about success.

FRED. I know everything. I'm not successful and outsiders watch the game.

LADY M. Children! Children!

PETER. Oh, don't apologise, Lady Mottram. I know what family life is in upper-class households. I've read my Shaw.

To their relief TIMSON *enters.*

LADY M. What is it, Timson?

TIMSON. Sir Jasper is asking for you on the telephone.

LADY M. Excuse me, Mr. Garside. (*Rising.*)

TIMSON. And there's a man called for you, sir. (*To* PETER.)

PETER. For me?

GLAD. You go, Freddie. Tell him Mr. Garside wants to be left alone.

FRED. (*nodding with understanding to* GLADYS). All right. I'll deal with him. Don't disturb yourself, Mr. Garside.

[LADY MOTTRAM *goes out first,* FRED. *follows quickly to give* PETER *no chance to reply. Exit* TIMSON.

PETER. I ought to go, Miss Mottram. I've meetings to address.

GLAD. Oh, but you mustn't disappoint Sir Jasper. He'll be in soon.

PETER. My time's precious.

GLAD. So are you—(*hastily*)—to your party, I mean. You'll break down if you overdo things.

PETER (*consulting watch*). My conscience isn't easy.

GLAD. (*coldly*). Oh, don't let me detain you against your will.

PETER. It's not against my will, only——

GLAD. Then won't you sit down?

PETER (*deciding to stay, and sitting on Chesterfield*).

Thank you. (*Stiffly.*) Some day I hope to have the pleasure of asking you to sit in a room of mine like this one.

GLAD. You aim high, Mr. Garside.

PETER. I mean to succeed. I feel I'm one of the men who do succeed. (*He doesn't boast, he states a conviction.*)

GLAD. (*insincerely*). I'm sure you are.

PETER (*ardently*). If you're sure, there's no doubt about it. I'm going to rise, Miss Mottram. I shall win fame, fortune—— Everything the heart of woman can desire will be mine to fling at the feet of my . . . my inspiration of the Midlandton election.

GLAD. Ah. Your mysterious vision!

PETER (*leaning forward*). Is she a mystery to you? I thought you knew.

GLAD. Knew what?

PETER. You see that inspiration every morning in your looking-glass.

GLAD. (*rising*). Mr. Garside!

PETER. I thought you understood. (*He rises.*)

GLAD. I understand you're being impertinent.

PETER (*confidently*). That's because you're thinking of my past. Peter Garside, the Board School boy, the working engineer with a home in a back street—a great gulf yawned between that Garside of the past and the daughter of Sir Jasper Mottram, four times Mayor of Midlandton. The gulf is narrower to-day. In a year or two it won't exist. I'm not impertinent, Miss Mottram. I'm being bold enough to look into the future . . . the future you've inspired.

GLAD. I ought to scold you, Mr. Garside.

PETER. Why?

GLAD. (*lightly*). You appropriated me as your inspiration without leave.

PETER. Didn't my eyes tell you across the crowd?

GLAD. Your eyes?

PETER (*emphatically*). Yes, mine spoke and yours answered mine, not once but half a dozen times.

GLAD. (*freezing*). I'm afraid you're subject to delusions, Mr. Garside.

PETER. You're afraid to tell the truth.

GLAD. (*fencing*). Truth's so miscellaneous, don't you think ? It's a diamond with many facets.

PETER. I'm not here to bandy epigrams. Truth is truth. You're afraid to own by mouth the truth you told me with your eyes.

GLAD. Don't you think you overrate the communicative capacity of eyes ?

PETER. I think you're playing with me now. I know you didn't play then. We had reality there in the street. I'll make you tell me yet you meant the things your eyes spoke to me.

GLAD. Make ! This is strange language for a drawing-room, sir.

PETER. I'm not talking to the drawing-room miss. She's a stranger to me. I'm talking to the real woman, the woman I knew outside there, stripped of the veil of lies you try to hide behind.

GLAD. But you don't know me. I never met you till to-night.

PETER. I didn't know your name until to-night. What do names matter ? Your eyes had blazed into my soul.

[*The door opens violently, and* JONES, *wearing his hat, bursts in followed by* FREDDIE, *who is mildly protestant.* PETER *and* GLADYS *rise.*

JONES (*crossing to centre*). What's the meaning of this, Garside ?

FRED. (*following and tapping him on the back*). I say, don't you even take your hat off in a lady's presence ?

JONES (*growlingly*). Ugh ! (*But he takes his hat off.*)

PETER. How dare you force your way in here ?

JONES. I may well come. You're wanted outside.

Meetings shouting themselves hoarse for you. Chances passing while you loll here in plutocratic luxury, idling in the gilded chambers of our enemies. Faugh! (*Kicking chair violently centre.* FREDDIE *picks up the cushion from it and offers it.*)

FRED. That's rather an expensive chair. Take it out of this if you must kick something.

PETER. I am paying an official call authorised by my Committee on Sir Jasper Mottram.

JONES. I don't see Sir Jasper.

FRED. I told this Johnnie you were busy. Tried to soothe the beggar, but he broke away.

JONES (*to* PETER). Well, you'd better come at once.

[PETER *wavers visibly when* GLADYS *interposes.*

GLAD. Mr. Garside is our guest.

JONES (*more roughly still*). Come away.

PETER (*his mind made up*). I shall do nothing of the sort.

JONES. Don't you understand? It's imperative. They're calling for you. We've done our best, marking time, promising them every minute you'd come—and you don't come. It's serious. They're impatient. They don't want us others. They want you—(*sarcastically*)—silver-tongued Garside. We can't hold them much longer. There'll be a riot if you don't turn up.

PETER (*lightly*). Oh, I'll come soon. Let them wait.

JONES. They won't wait.

PETER. They'll have to.

JONES (*imperatively*). You're coming now with me.

PETER. No. I'll follow you. (*Reassuringly.*) It's all right, man. I shan't be long.

JONES. I'll report you to the Committee if you don't come at once.

PETER. You can report me to the devil. Get along now, that's a good chap. I'm busy.

JONES (*very earnestly*). Garside, I warn you. You know what a crowd's like when it gets out of hand.

PETER. I tell you I'm coming. The longer you stay the longer it'll be before I get there.

JONES (*making his best effort and meaning it*). If you don't come with me you'll have no need to get there. I shall bring them here to you.

FRED. Oh, but you can't do that you know.

JONES. Can't I? You tell him to come or I'll show you if I can't.

PETER (*impatiently*). In a minute.

JONES (*inexorably*). Now!

PETER. No.

JONES (*turning abruptly*). Very well, then.

[*Exit* JONES, *slamming door.* FRED. *opens it after a moment.*

FRED. I don't think the furniture's safe until he's out of the house.

[*Exit* FREDDIE.

GLAD. (*excited and utterly sincere*). It must be glorious to be wanted like that, Mr. Garside. Isn't it risky to deny them when they call for you?

PETER. I can do what I like with them.

GLAD. Why didn't you go?

PETER. You know why not.

GLAD. (*sitting on Chesterfield*). Do I?

PETER (*standing centre*). Every night I can make myself the master of a mob. It's no new joy to me to feel I've got them there in the hollow of my hand. I can't speak with you every night. That's why I didn't go.

GLAD. But is it wise?

PETER. Wise?

GLAD. You mustn't spoil your chances, Mr. Garside.

PETER. I won't spoil my chances of speaking with you.

GLAD. But if the crowd makes a disturbance? That man's malicious. He'll stir them up to mischief.

PETER. I can calm them with a word.

GLAD. What confidence you have!

PETER. Yes. In the power you give me.

GLAD. You don't let me shuffle off responsibility.

PETER. You wouldn't want to if you could forget that you're Miss Mottram and I'm a working man.

[*Low murmurs as of a distant crowd off, approaching and growing louder as the scene proceeds.* GLADYS *catches it at once, and is alarmed.* PETER, *if he hears at all, is inattentive.*

GLAD. I really think you'd better go to them, Mr. Garside, before that man leads them here.

PETER. Not long ago you were urging me to stay—to wait for Sir Jasper.

GLAD. Sir Jasper will be late.

PETER. You said he'd be here soon.

GLAD. (*rising, exasperated*). Mr. Garside, will you go?

PETER (*shaking his head*). You haven't told me what I want to know.

GLAD. What is it? I'll tell you anything if you'll only go—go.

PETER (*calmly*). Did I read the meaning in your eyes aright? (*A slight pause.*) Did I?

GLAD. (*nervously glancing towards window*). I don't know what you mean.

PETER. You do know. You won't tell me.

GLAD. I can't.

PETER (*sitting centre*). Then I'll stay here till you do.

GLAD. And hold me responsible if your ragamuffins wreck the house.

PETER. You've only to speak, and I'll see they don't come near.

[*A moment's silence, then* FREDDIE *enters briskly.*

FRED. I say, Mr. Garside, I'm afraid we must turn you out.

PETER (*still sitting*). Oh, how's that?

FRED. Your friend went off in no end of a rage. Said he'd bring your meeting here. Mohammed and the Mountain, don't you know? I really think you'd better go. We don't want to read the Riot Act.

[GLADYS *is at the window, peeping through blind.*

PETER. The matter's out of my hands, Mr. Mottram.

FRED. Why? Surely you can head them off.

PETER. Easily.

FRED. (*irritated*). Well, I wish you'd go and do it.

GLAD. (*at window*). They're there. There's a crowd coming round the corner now.

FRED. You'll have to look lively. Come on, man. (*Trying to make him move.*)

PETER (*to* GLADYS, *who is standing left*). Well, Miss Mottram?

FRED. (*impatiently*). Oh, never mind her. Get along sharp. (*He opens door.*)

PETER. I'm ready when Miss Mottram gives the word. I shall know what she means if she says "Yes."

GLAD. I can't.

PETER (*sitting in chair*). Then I stay here.

[*Shouts below are heard: "Garside!" "We want Garside!" "Where's that silver-tongue?"*

FRED. Look here, this is getting beyond a joke.

PETER. I'm only waiting for the word of command.

FRED. Gladys, for God's sake say what he wants!

GLAD. No.

[*Shouts more fiercely.*

FRED. (*helplessly irritable*). Where the devil are the police?

[LADY MOTTRAM *rushes in hysterically.*

LADY M. Mr. Garside, save us. Speak to them before they get violent.

PETER (*coolly*). They're doing the speaking. (LADY M. *cries out inarticulately.*) I'm waiting for Miss Mottram.

LADY M. For Gladys? (*Top pane of the window is*

broken by a stone which falls between blind and window. Almost shrieking.) What's that ?

PETER. The voice of the people.

FRED. They've a nasty way of talking. This looks serious. (*Crosses, picks up and quickly pockets the stone, which is a large one.*)

LADY M. Is it a big one ?

FRED. (*nonchalantly*). Size of a piece of wood.

GLAD. Very well, then. Yes.

PETER (*rising briskly*). That's what I wanted. (*Crosses as if to open door, comes round to window, runs blind up, and steps out to balcony.*)

GLAD. (*as he is at window*). I didn't mean it.

PETER. You said it. (*He goes out, speaking as if to a crowd below.*) Comrades, I'm here. (*Cheers off.*) From the house of our Mayor, on whom I am calling as the people's candidate at this election——

[FRED. *crosses and closes window. Faint murmur only is audible off.*

FRED. I can't stand this. He's spouting Socialism from our balcony. (*Angrily.*) This is your fault, Gladys.

GLAD. I was told to keep him here.

[LADY MOTTRAM *has collapsed on the Chesterfield.*

FRED. Not with a mob howling for him outside.

GLAD. I didn't bring the mob.

LADY M. What will Sir Jasper say ?

FRED. (*recovering his temper*). He'll not be fit to listen to. We're the laughing-stock of Midlandton. This 'ull win Garside the election. He's using the balcony of the Chairman of the Employers' Federation for his platform, and we've let him do it.

GLAD. We tried to trick him and he's turned the tables on us. That's all.

FRED. Clever beast. (*Laughter off.*)

LADY M. Listen to the cheering !

FRED. Oh, he's popular, only that's not cheering. It's laughter.

LADY M. What are they laughing at ?

FRED. At us, *ma petite mère*, at us.

LADY M. (*standing, with extreme dignity*). They wouldn't dare !

[*Loud burst of laughter.*

CURTAIN.

ACT III

PETER'S *rooms in the Temple. Door extreme right centre, with the passage beyond visible with telephone on its wall when the door is open. Door left. Fireplace centre, with low fire shining dully in the darkened room. Bookcase right. Below it, table with inkstand. Blue books, etc., and revolving chair. Arm-chairs, left and right of fireplace. Sofa left, between fireplace and door. Heavy carpet. The whole appointments indicate comfort and taste, as understood in Tottenham Court Road : there is nothing individual about them.*

As the curtain rises the room is in darkness, except for the glow from the fire, and the telephone bell right is ringing. After a moment's pause the outside door opens ; then PETER *in a lounge suit, overcoat, and bowler hat opens the door right and turns on the electric light. He speaks as he looks off right. His self-confidence has increased. He is, in fact, coarsened and even brazen at times.*

PETER. Come in here. (FREDDIE *and* GLADYS *follow him in.* PETER *stands by door.*) Make yourselves at home for two minutes. That's my telephone ringing like mad.

[*Exit* PETER *hurriedly, closing the door. Bell ceases ringing.* GLADYS *is in winter costume with furs.* FREDDIE, *in heavy overcoat with hat in hand and a cane which he swings as he stands centre, surveying the room in astonishment.*

FRED. By Jove ! By Jove !

GLAD. (*standing off*). What's the matter ?

FRED. Does himself all right.

GLAD. What did you expect ?

FRED. I didn't expect this.

GLAD. Was that why you didn't want to come in?

FRED. I didn't want to come because I've to meet Charlie Beversham at the hotel in half an hour.

GLAD. Well, you can meet him.

FRED. Not if we stay here long.

GLAD. You needn't stay here.

FRED. Oh? And what about you?

GLAD. I'll stay.

FRED. Hang it, you can't do that.

GLAD. No. You'd rather I wasted another evening sitting with the frumps in the hotel drawing-room while you discuss odds with your sporting friend in the bar till it's too late to go anywhere. I'm having no more nights in a refrigerator, thank you.

FRED. It's not the thing to leave you here. You'll only be in Garside's way. He'll be going to the House.

GLAD. Then he'll leave me at the hotel as he goes.

FRED. You know the mater only let you loose in London because I promised to look after you. (*Good-naturedly perplexed.*) You're a ghastly responsibility. Why on earth do you want to stay with Garside?

GLAD. Garside's amusing and the hotel isn't.

FRED. I simply must see Beversham. It means money to me.

GLAD. Don't let me stand in your way.

FRED. (*giving way*). Well, I do like to be generous. It's the only thing that keeps my blood at normal temperature——

PETER (*off right, at telephone*). I shall shout. You may be the whip, but you'll not whip me. Important division? I know that as well as you do. No, I shan't be there. Promised? Of course I promised. I started to come. How did I know I was going to be indisposed in the Strand?

FRED. (*whistling*). Whew! I wouldn't mind betting you're the indisposition, Gladys.

PETER (*off*). Yes. I'm far too ill to turn out. What? No, I'm not too ill to shout. Good night. (*Opens door and enters without his hat and overcoat.*) Oh, do sit down, Miss Mottram. So sorry I'd to leave you. (*Pulls left arm-chair before fire and pokes it.*) I'll make the fire up. It's a cold night. (GLADYS *sits.*)

FRED. Comfortable enough in here, Garside. You've snug quarters.

PETER (*failing to conceal his pride in his room*). It's a beginning. (*Rising from fire.*) One moment. (*Goes off left quickly, and is heard as he exits, saying:*) Mother, you let that fire go low.

MRS. G. (*off left*). I thought you'd gone out.

FRED. Oh, if he's got a mother on the premises that alters the case. I don't mind your staying now.

[PETER *re-enters with* MRS. GARSIDE *in a neat black dress, spectacles on, and a "Daily Telegraph" in her hand.* MRS. GARSIDE, *though sharing* PETER'S *prosperity, has now an habitually worried look and is vaguely pathetic. She enters embarrassed.*

PETER (*off-handedly, treating his mother without ceremony*). Mr. Mottram, Miss Mottram—my mother.

[FREDDIE *bows.* GLADYS *advances and takes hands.*

GLAD. How do you do, Mrs. Garside?

MRS. G. Nicely, thank you, miss.

PETER (*peremptorily*). Why didn't you hear the telephone, mother? Were you asleep?

MRS. G. (*meekly*). Did it ring? I was reading the report of your speech at Battersea last night.

PETER (*interested*). Oh! Where is it? I haven't had time to look at a paper to-day.

MRS. G. (*handing him the paper and pointing*). There, dear.

PETER (*looking and speaking with satisfaction*). Two columns. Good. That's pretty near verbatim.

FRED. Two columns in the "Telegraph"? You're getting on, Garside.

MRS. G. (*handing the paper from* PETER *to* FRED.). And look at the headings!

FRED. (*looking—awkwardly*). Er—yes—not very complimentary.

GLAD. (*curiously*). What are they?

FRED. (*returning paper to* PETER). Tact never was my sister's strong point, Garside.

PETER (*holding up the paper*). Oh, I don't mind this in the least. It means my blows are getting home. (*Reading the headings.*) "The Demagogue again." "More Firebrand Oratory from the egregious Garside." (*Putting paper on table.*) Spreading themselves, aren't they?

FRED. Well, it's all right, so long as you don't mind.

PETER. Oh, they'll need a big vocabulary to express their feelings before I'm done with them. I haven't started yet.

FRED. Hope it'll keep fine for you. Afraid I must toddle, Garside. I've an appointment.

PETER (*his face falling in deep disappointment*). Appointment! Oh, I did hope you'd both stay a bit. In fact, I—I put off an engagement while I was at the telephone.

FRED. (*looking at* GLADYS). Well—er—I might come back for my sister.

PETER (*enthusiastically*). Splendid! Have something before you go?

FRED. (*surprised*). Eh?

PETER (*taking his arm*). Just to keep the cold out. Next room.

FRED. (*turning with him*). I'd an idea you were a teetotaller.

PETER. I was a lot of things in Midlandton. In London I'm a man of the world.

[*Exeunt* FREDDIE *and* PETER, L.

GLAD. (*sitting on sofa*). You must find London a great change after Midlandton, Mrs. Garside.

MRS. G. (*sitting in left arm-chair, facing her—confidentially*). I haven't had an easy hour since Peter brought me. You wouldn't believe the prices they charge me in the shops if I want a chop or a bit of steak for Peter's tea. Dinner he calls it now, though how it can be dinner at seven of an evening I don't know. Thieves, that's what they are. Not shopkeepers. You mustn't mind me running on, I haven't a soul I know to talk to here. It's a pleasure to see you, I'm sure. And the streets! I'm feared for my life if I go out. I know I'll be knocked down and brought home dead. Eh, London's an awful place, but it's Peter's home now, and his home's mine.

GLAD. But you'll get used to it.

MRS. G. I doubt I'll never get used to this. I'm too old to change, and Peter moves so fast. What's fit for him one day isn't good enough the next. The waste's enough to frighten you.

GLAD. You must be very proud of your son, Mrs. Garside.

MRS. G. (*with conviction, dropping her querulous tone*). He's something to be proud of. I'm the mother of a great man. You can't open a newspaper without you see his name.

GLAD. I know that.

MRS. G. You've seen it?

GLAD. Often.

MRS. G. (*rising and coming to table*). But not all. I've got them all here. I cut them out, reports of his speeches, and paste them in this book. (*Crosses to sofa with press-cutting book and sits by* GLADYS.)

GLAD. His speeches in Parliament?

MRS. G. (*with fine scorn*). Peter doesn't waste his words on Parliament. He goes direct to the people—addressing meetings up and down the country. (*Glowing with pride.*) They fight to get him. Pity is he can't split himself in bits and be in six places at once. Two guineas a speech he gets—and expenses,—more sometimes. That's what they

think of him, Miss Mottram. That's my son. (*Pointing to a heading in the book.*) Silver-tongued Garside. That's what they call him.

GLAD. Yes, I see. (*She turns a page.*)

MRS. G. (*looking, bending round* GLADYS). Oh, no, not that. I oughtn't to have pasted that in. It's an attack on him in one of our own papers. They call him something he didn't like.

GLAD. (*reading*). Platitudinous Peter.

MRS. G. It's all their spite.

GLAD. I suppose all politicians make enemies.

MRS. G. Oh, he's not afraid of his real enemies. The capitalists can call him what they like. They do, too, and the more the better, Peter says. But that's different. Mean things, attacking their own side.

GLAD. (*absently*). Yes. (*Putting book down.*) And this is where he prepares his speeches. (*Crossing to table.*)

MRS. G. (*rising with book and crossing, replacing it on table*). Yes. Those are his books.

[GLADYS *looks at titles.*

GLAD. Why, this row's all dictionaries.

MRS. G. Peter says people like long words. He writes his article at that desk. Peter's printed in the paper every week.

GLAD. He's kept busy.

MRS. G. And he keeps me busy looking after him.

GLAD. (*sitting in the revolving chair and facing* MRS. GARSIDE, *standing centre*). Have you no help?

MRS. G. Me? Nay. I couldn't abide the thought of a strange woman doing 'owt for Peter. I've cared for him all his life, and I'll go on caring for him until he's put another woman in my place. Peter's wife won't be of my class. It'll be my duty then to keep myself out of her sight, and a hard job I'll find it, too, but I was never one to shirk.

GLAD. Didn't I hear something about a girl in Midlandton, who——

MRS. G. (*with conviction*). Don't you believe it, miss. She wasn't fit to clean his boots.

GLAD. And of course he's all London to choose from now.

MRS. G. London! He'll never wed a Londoner.

GLAD. No?

MRS. G. He's in love with a Midlandton young lady. Calls her his inspiration and I don't know what. But I tell you this, miss, I don't care who she is, she'll be doing well for herself when she marries my Peter.

GLAD. You think she will marry him, then?

MRS. G. I'd like to see the woman who'd refuse him when he asks her.

[*Re-enter, left,* FRED. *and* PETER. FRED. *addressing* PETER.

FRED. Yes. I'll come back. I say, Garside, before I go, congratters, and all that sort of thing, you know.

PETER (*the pair have emerged very friendly*). Congratulations?

FRED. (*sweeping his hat round*). On all this.

PETER (*still puzzled*). This?

FRED. This jolly little place, and so on.

PETER. Oh, that's nothing. Part of the game, my boy.

FRED. It's a profitable game when you can run to this after six months of it.

PETER. It doesn't afford it. Did you ever hear of the hire system? A man who means to be a big success simply must have a decent address and be on the telephone. People won't believe in you if you're content to hide yourself up a mean street.

FRED. But you *are* a big success, Mr. Garside.

PETER. Oh, I've not arrived yet. I'm ambitious.

FRED. I like your pluck. Give me a quiet life and a thousand a year paid quarterly by the Bank of England. Security's my mark.

PETER. I'm betting on a certainty when I put money on myself.

FRED. I'm such a thrifty soul. I never risk more than 10 per cent of my income on certainties. That reminds me. Beversham. I must fly. See you later. (*Reaches door right.*) About half an hour, Gladys.

[PETER *goes out with him, is heard closing outer door, and returns immediately, closing door.* MRS. GARSIDE *yawns ostentatiously.*

GLAD. (*more with an air of saying something than meaning anything*). Strange that we should meet in the Strand by accident, Mr. Garside.

PETER (*who has paid for the moment more attention to* MRS. GARSIDE *than to* GLADYS, *speaking jerkily*). You call it accident? I call it Fate. (MRS. GARSIDE *executes another palpably diplomatic yawn.*) You're tired, mother.

MRS. G. Yes.

PETER. I'm sure Miss Mottram will excuse you.

MRS. G. Then I think I'll go to my bed. I'm an early bird. Good night, Miss Mottram.

GLAD. (*after a moment's twinge of conscience, accepting* MRS. GARSIDE'S *hand*). Good night, Mrs. Garside.

MRS. G. (*to* PETER, *who opens right door*). I'll put your supper out. You'll only have your cocoa to make.

[PETER *tries not to look angry at the intrusion of domestic details. Exit* MRS. GARSIDE. PETER *closes the door and stands by it.* GLADYS *is still in the revolving chair with her back to the table.*

PETER. Yes. Fate didn't mean us two to miss each other.

GLAD. (*lightly*). Do you believe in Fate?

PETER. I believe in mine. I know I was born under a lucky star. I've a genius for overcoming obstacles, no matter what they are, Miss Mottram. I've the knack of getting what I want.

GLAD. Don't you find continuous success monotonous?

PETER (*smiling*). They're such precious small successes. I'm on the foothills yet, and I've set myself a lot of peaks to climb, but already I'm in sight of the highest of them all. (*Looking at her hard.*) Even from where I stand now I can glimpse the Mount Everest of my ambition.

GLAD. Happy man, to know what you want. Most of us poor creatures haven't the faintest idea what we want to do with our lives.

PETER. I think better of you than that. You're not a bored society butterfly.

GLAD. Must one be in society to be bored ? I am bored in Midlandton.

PETER (*with the quickly acquired London attitude to the provinces*). Oh, Midlandton !

GLAD. We don't live in Midlandton. No one does. Midlandton ! It sends a shiver up your back like the tear of a sheet.

PETER. I couldn't go back now.

GLAD. And I've given up hope of ever getting to London.

PETER. Do you want to very much ? (*Draws towards right arm-chair, and sits leaning forward towards her.*)

GLAD. (*with deep conviction*). I feel sometimes I'd do anything on earth to live here. (*Smiling.*) You see, I'd like to be a society butterfly. You can't understand that, I suppose.

PETER. Why not ?

GLAD. I thought you despised luxury.

PETER. Oh dear no. I like good clothes and soft living.

GLAD. But you denounce them.

PETER. What I denounce is luxury for the few and penury for the many. We want to level up, not level down.

GLAD. I've heard something like that before.

PETER. Probably. It's not my business to be original. If I tried to be lofty I'd be talking above the heads of my audiences.

GLAD. (*puzzled*). I wonder how much is sincere!

PETER. Sincere? I'm a profesional advocate. I take a tiny grain of truth, dress it up in a pompous parade of rhetoric and deliver it in the manner of an oracle and the accent of a cheapjack. It's a question of making my points tell. Sincerity doesn't matter.

GLAD. (*rising*). If I turned myself into a human gramophone, I shouldn't boast about it, Mr. Garside. It's not very creditable to live by fooling the public.

PETER (*rising*). Creditable? If I fooled them from Fleet Street they'd make me a peer. The public likes to be fooled. They know I'm fooling them. They pay me to go on fooling them. Some men live by selling adulterated beer. I live by selling adulterated truth.

GLAD. And neither makes an honest livelihood.

PETER. No, neither your father the brewer, nor I the demagogue. But I'm being frank with you, Miss Mottram. Between us two there's not to be pretence.

GLAD. Why am *I* honoured with your confidences?

PETER. Because you have a right to know. I do these things to make money. I want money because—because of the hope that was born in me when your eyes first met mine across the crowd in Midlandton.

GLAD. (*after a slight pause*). Mr. Garside, I—I think I ought to go. My brother only left me because he thought your mother would be here.

PETER (*going towards door right*). Shall I bring her?

GLAD. She's gone to bed.

PETER. I fancy I can find her if you tell me to.

GLAD. I'm sure I ought.

PETER. I'm sure you always do what you ought, so——
(*Putting his hand to the door-handle.*)

GLAD. (*quickly*). Yes, I do—in Midlandton.

PETER (*turning quickly from door*). And this is London. You're on holiday.

GLAD. (*checking him*). But not from my conscience, Mr. Garside.

PETER. Oh, conscience is so much a matter of climate. A Midlandton conscience finds London air very relaxing.

GLAD. (*sitting slowly right as before*). I don't think you ought to disturb your mother, Mr. Garside.

PETER (*resuming his own chair, with conscious hypocrisy*). No. Old people need such a lot of sleep. So that's settled. Let me see. I was talking about myself, wasn't I ?

GLAD. Yes. You seem to find the subject interesting.

PETER. I'll talk about the weather if you prefer it.

GLAD. No. You can stick to your text.

PETER. Thanks. But I wasn't talking about myself alone.

GLAD. (*reflectively*). I don't remember the exception. It was all yourself and the money you're going to make.

PETER. The money. Yes. I'm making money, Miss Mottram, and I'm going to make more. Do you know why ?

GLAD. Money's always useful, I suppose.

PETER. Yes, even a little of it. But I shan't be satisfied with little. And I'm a fairly frugal man.

GLAD. You'll grow into a miser on the margin between your moderate wants and your colossal income.

PETER. I might grow into a married man on that margin. It's to be a good margin, because I believe no man should ask his wife to accept a lower standard of living than she's been accustomed to.

GLAD. I didn't know Miss Shawcross lived so well.

PETER (*rising, sternly*). It isn't a question of Miss Shawcross.

GLAD. I thought it was.

PETER. So did I when I was a boy in Midlandton about a hundred years ago. I'm wiser now. Women of her

class can't adapt themselves to changed circumstances. They're a drag on a man's career. You've seen Miss Shawcross ?

GLAD. Yes.

PETER. Well, you know the type. Good, plodding, conscientious, provincial girl, with about as much ambition as a potato. Marry her to a bank clerk and she'll be in her proper place. Picture her the wife of a Cabinet Minister, and—well, no, you can't. It's unthinkable.

GLAD. The wife of a what ?

PETER (*imperviously*). A Cabinet Minister.

GLAD. But you're not a Cabinet Minister.

PETER (*quite seriously*). No, I'm young yet. What a man of my stamp wants is a wife who can help him to push his way, not one I'd be ashamed to show in society.

GLAD. I see. You're marrying into one of the big political families.

PETER. No. I'm showing you how you can be done with Midlandton and get to London. You said you'd do anything for that.

GLAD. I meant anything in reason. Shall we change the subject ?

PETER. No.

GLADYS (*rising, curtly*). Then I must go back to the hotel.

PETER. Your brother's coming for you. Meantime I ask you to remember the difference between the Peter Garside of six months ago and the Garside of to-day. I've bridged the gulf that lay between us. A man of genius can do things like that. I meant what I said, Miss Mottram. I didn't say it till you encouraged me.

GLAD. I have not encouraged you.

PETER. You're here, you know. You let your brother go without you. You let my mother leave us alone. Isn't that encouragement ?

GLAD. (*as cruelly as she can*). I stayed because I find you amusing.

PETER. Yes. I dare say I am amusing. People in deadly earnest usually are.

GLAD. (*gently*). We'll forget what you said, Mr. Garside.

PETER. No, we won't. I can't ask you to marry me yet because I am not rich. I'm merely prospering. But I ask you to wait. Give me a year—no, six months. I can offer you a home in London then. It won't be worthy of you, but we shan't stagnate. May I come to you in six months' time to get your answer to the question I haven't yet the right to ask?

GLAD. I don't know.

PETER. No. But I know six months of Midlandton are longer than six years here. You badly want to live in London now. You'll want it worse then. Don't think of me as I was. That's buried. Think of me as I am and as I'm going to be. (*Electric bell rings right.*) That's probably your brother.

GLAD (*half sorry, but on the whole relieved*). Yes. Don't keep him waiting.

PETER (*moving right, and stopping*). Before I open the door won't you tell me what I want to know? It's all for you—all my ambitions. I only want position for you to grace it, money for you to spend. Give me six happy months of hope.

GLAD. (*with a low laugh*). Will hoping make you happy?

PETER. Yes, if you tell me I may hope.

GLAD (*sincerely*). Then by all means hope.

[*Bell rings again.*

PETER. That's all I want. (*He looks at her humbly. She extends her hand impulsively.* PETER *kisses it reverently.*)

GLAD. You're very absurd. Now let my brother in.

[PETER *crosses and opens door right, leaving it half open, as he goes through and opens outside door.*

PETER (*heard off right, in surprised voice*). Hullo!

NED. (*off right, less loudly*). Good evening.

[PETER *appears outside door right, pulling it to him.*

PETER (*off*). Leave your coats here. Excuse me. I'll —I'll just close this door and keep the cold out till you're ready.

[*He enters rapidly, opening the door as little as possible, and closing it quickly, putting his back to it. The manœuvre is not, however, executed fast enough to prevent* JONES *peering over his shoulder as he enters.*

PETER (*standing against the door*). It's not your brother.

GLAD. (*dryly*). I gathered that. I'd better go without him.

PETER (*agitated*). You can't. That's the only way out. They'd see you.

GLAD. (*surprised*). I don't mind.

PETER. They mustn't.

GLAD. Why not ? Who are they ?

PETER. Constituents.

GLAD. (*alarmed*). From Midlandton ?

PETER. Yes. Let them get a glimpse of you, and God only knows what tale will be over Midlandton.

GLAD. (*agreeing*). Yes. They musn't see me. On no account. (*She crosses to left,* PETER *nods approvingly.*)

PETER. My mother's there. I'll get rid of them quickly.

GLAD. Remember, I'm trusting you.

[*Exit* GLADYS, *left.* PETER *opens door right, and speaks off.*

PETER. Ready, comrades ? Come in. (NED *and* JONES *enter, dressed much as in Act I.* PETER *is genial.*) How are you ? Both well ?

JONES (*as they shake hands*). Yes, thanks. (*With slight emphasis.*) Are you well ?

PETER. Quite well, thanks. Never better in my life. (NED *and* JONES *exchange glances.*) Sit down, comrades. It's good to see Midlandton faces again.

[NED *in arm-chair right,* JONES *left,* PETER *in revolving chair.* PETER's *attitude at first is the mixture of obsequiousness and patronage of an M.P. to influential supporters.*

NED. I suppose you don't see many people from the old town here?

PETER. You're the first I've seen since I came up.

NED. Ah!

PETER. And what brings you to town? Pleasure, I suppose.

JONES. Well——

PETER. Yes, I know. London's a playground to you fellows. It's more like a battlefield to your hard-worked member.

JONES (*firmly*). It's not exactly pleasure we're here for, Comrade Garside.

PETER. Oh?

NED. More like business. We're a sort of a delegation.

PETER. Delegates, eh? What's on? I don't remember any congress at the moment?

JONES. We're on a special mission.

PETER (*obviously forcing an appearance of interest*). Now, that's very interesting. May I ask the object of this mission?

JONES (*grimly*). You're the object.

PETER. I?

NED. Yes. We've a crow to pluck with you, my lad.

PETER (*not yet greatly concerned*). Oh? Something you want to discuss?

JONES. Something we're going to discuss.

PETER (*rising*). Well, suppose I meet you to-morrow morning. Come here at—yes—at eleven, and I'll give you an hour with pleasure.

NED (*shaking his head*). You'll give us an hour, or as long as we want, now.

PETER. Really, I'm afraid I can't. (*Involuntarily glancing left.*) I'm busy to-night. I'll see you to-morrow.

JONES. We shan't be here to-morrow. We've to go back by the midnight train. We've our livings to earn.

PETER. Well, look here, come back in an hour or so, and I'll see you then.

JONES (*commandingly*). You'll see us now. Your time's ours, we pay for it.

PETER. You haven't bought me, you know. You pay me to represent your interests at Westminster.

JONES. Then why aren't you there representing them to-night?

PETER (*irritably*). I've told you I'm busy.

JONES. Busy with what?

PETER. Mind your own business.

NED (*quietly*). It is our business. We've a right to know why you're neglecting your duty.

PETER (*hotly*). I don't neglect my duty.

NED. What's on at the House to-night?

PETER (*embarrassed*). Well——

NED (*inexorably*). What's on?

PETER. The Right to Work Bill, I believe. (*Sitting again.*)

NED. Yes. The Right to Work Bill. The corner-stone of the Labour policy. Any Labour member who's absent from to-night's division deserves drumming out of the party as a traitor to its cause.

PETER. Oh, I'll be there for the division if you don't keep me here too long.

NED. The division's over. You're out of your place on the most important night of the session. You've missed your chance to speak. You've missed the division. You've not paired. Your vote's lost.

PETER. It's not. The division can't take place so early.

JONES. We've been to the House. We thought we'd find you there. Why weren't you there?

PETER. I've told you I was busy.

NED. You told the Whip on the telephone you were ill—too ill to turn out. We were there when he rang you up. We come here, and we find you well.

PETER. I *am* indisposed.

JONES. Indisposed!

PETER. I meant to go. I started out to go only I became ill on the way.

JONES. You told us when you shook hands you'd never been better.

PETER. Oh, I dare say. The usual figure of speech. I *am* recovering.

JONES. No. You spoke the truth then. You're lying now.

PETER. Lying! This is too much. (*Rising.*)

JONES (*rising*). You'll like it less before we've finished. We're not in London losing a day's wages for our health. We've been called up to decide what's to be done with you.

PETER (*angrily*). You'll decide what's to be done with *me*. You!

JONES (*firmly*). We have decided.

NED (*still sitting*). They've been showing us your record at the Whip's office. You ignore them. You go to the House when you think you will. You refuse to submit to discipline.

PETER. I serve the cause in my own way. (*He is consciously on his defence now.*) It's a better way than listening to dry-as-dust debates and tramping endless miles through the division lobbies. I'm getting at the people. I'm carrying the fiery sword of revolutionary Socialism through the length and breadth of the land. I'm the harbinger of the new age. Wherever I go I leave behind me an awakened people, stirred from their lethargy and indolent acceptance of things as they are, fired with new hopes of the coming dispensation, eager to throw off the yoke and strike their blow for freedom, justice, and the social revolution. That's my work, comrades, not wasting my energy, my gift of oratory on the canting hypocrites at Westminster, but keeping them fresh for the honest man outside. I'm going to quarter England, town by town, until——

NED (*rising, and putting his hand on* PETER'S *arm, shaking his head*). It won't do, Garside.

JONES. You needn't wag that silver tongue at us. You're found out.

PETER. Found out! You can't find out a man you're incapable of understanding. You can't drive genius with a bearing rein. I'm a man of genius, and you're angry because I can't be a cog in the parliamentary machine.

NED (*quietly*). Whatever you are, you're paid to be a cog.

PETER. If I'm to do my great work for the cause I must live somehow. The labourer is worthy of his hire.

JONES. You're hired twice over. You get lecture fees when you ought to be in the House. You make local secretaries compete for your lectures to force your price up. You've got swelled head till you think you can do as you like.

PETER. I won't be dictated to by you.

NED. And yet we're your masters, you know.

PETER. It's my nature to be a free lance. Routine would kill me. I've to work for the cause in my own way.

NED. We don't want free lances. We want workers. If you want to speak to the people aren't your week-ends and vacations good enough?

PETER. A hundred days to every week are not enough.

NED. We sent you to Parliament to obey the Party Whips and be governed by older and wiser heads than yours.

PETER. Nelson won battles by disobeying orders. If you didn't want independence you shouldn't have chosen me.

JONES. We see that now. You'd ceased to be representative of the Midlandton working classes before we chose you for our candidate. You *were* a B.A. You're still less able to represent us now when you make as much in a

month as your average constituent does in a year. We'll have a better man next time.

PETER. Yes. You find an ignorant, dense average specimen of the British workman without a soul above thirty shillings a week, and he'll just about represent the ideas and ambitions of the Midlandton mob.

JONES. Yes, he'll represent us better than you.

PETER. Then God help representative government! You'd better be careful. My personal popularity's your finest platform asset.

NED. Well, it's an asset we can do without. Put it that you're too brilliant for us.

PETER. Oh, it's the old story. Genius and the Philistine. For two pins I'd resign my seat.

NED (*gravely*). We accept your resignation.

PETER. What!

JONES. We come here to demand it.

PETER (*abject*). Comrades, you don't mean this! You wouldn't do a man out of his job.

JONES (*curtly*). Oh, we're finding you a new job.

PETER. What's that?

JONES. The Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds.

PETER (*slight pause*). I won't resign. You've tried and judged me in my absence. You haven't given me a chance to say a word in my own defence.

NED. You can talk till you're blue in the face without shifting facts.

PETER (*growing increasingly hysterical*). The facts are that I'm a Member of the House of Commons for the term of this Parliament, and you can't force me to resign until I do it of my own free will. I'm still M.P. for Midlandton, if I've to sleep on the Embankment. I'll go to the House in rags. I'll be an M.P. still, M.P. for the outcast, the despised, the rejected, the human derelicts, victims of jealousy and injustice and all man's inhumanity to man.

JONES (*contemptuously*). You're the victim of nothing but your own swelled head.

PETER. I'm the victim of my own great nature. A nature that's cast in too large a mould to submit to pettifogging little rules. My life was the people's. I demanded nothing in return but a free hand and no interference. I've to do this mighty task in my own way.

JONES. Yes. The way you found most profitable.

PETER. I'm spending every penny I earn.

JONES. Yes. I'll believe you for once. This place proves that. We sent you here to be our representative, not to be a bloody* gentleman. I know what your indisposition was that kept you from the House tonight. I saw its skirts when you opened the door. That's what we're paying for. For you to—faugh, you sicken me.

PETER. You lie.

JONES. I don't. I saw her.

PETER (*deliberately*). There's no woman here except my mother.

NED (*solemnly*). Is that the truth, Peter? I also thought I saw a skirt that I'm sure your mother couldn't wear.

PETER. It's the truth. Upon my word of honour it's the truth.

JONES (*roughly*). I don't believe it.

NED (*protesting*). We have his word, Karl.

JONES. The word of a convicted liar. He lied about his absence from the House. He's lying now.

PETER (*with determination*). You'll take my word for it.

[*Door bell rings* R.

JONES. Yes, if you'll let me see who's in that room.

PETER. My mother's there.

JONES. And no one else?

PETER. Nobody.

JONES. Then show us. Prove it.

* This word must be omitted in representation. It was censored by the Lord Chamberlain about two months before it was passed in Mr. Shaw's "Pygmalion."

NED. He's said enough, Karl. He's passed his word.

JONES. I don't believe his word's worth that. (*Snapping fingers.*) He's lying for a woman. (*Bitterly.*) It's the code of a gentleman to lie for a woman.

[*Door bell rings again.*

PETER. I can't help your disbelief.

JONES. No, but you can open that door. (*Indicating left.*)

PETER (*his back to the door*). You'll take my word. (*Again the door bell rings, and* MRS. GARSIDE *enters left.* PETER *turns round on her, surprising her by his vehemence. Angrily.*) What is it ?

[*The door remains open.*

MRS. G. Someone's at the door. Didn't you hear the bell ring ?

PETER. Let it ring. Don't you see I've visitors ?

NED (*coming forward like a friend*). Good evening, Mrs. Garside.

MRS. G. (*unheeding, troubled with* PETER). But it'll be Mr. Mottram come back for his sister.

JONES. What ?

[*He crosses to look through the left door.* GLADYS *enters, meeting* JONES' *eye.*

GLAD. May I go through to my brother, Mr. Garside ?

JONES (*falling back*). Miss Mottram !

[PETER *looks from one to the other like a caged animal.*

NED (*with genuine feeling*). Lad, lad, do you lie for the sake of lying ?

JONES (*triumphantly, his voice ringing*). I think there'll be no difficulty about that resignation now.

PETER (*after a slight pause, tensely*). On one condition.

JONES (*scornfully*). You're in a grand position for making conditions.

PETER. Keep your mouths shut about Miss Mottram's presence here, and I place my resignation in the Speaker's hands to-morrow. (*Slight pause.*)

NED. I accept.

JONES (*disagreeing violently*). Well, I——

NED. *You* accept.

JONES. But——

NED. You have our promise, Garside, and you can take my word.

[JONES *is silent and sullen.*

GLAD. (*vaguely*). What!

PETER (*hysterically*). You heard. I'm resigning my seat in the House of Commons. Humpty-dumpty had a great fall. (JONES *laughs aloud,* GLADYS *smiles slightly,* PETER *almost screams.*) Don't laugh. (*Suddenly self-pitying.*) I don't know what I'm saying. (*With a flicker of the old pride.*) But I was an M.P. once. You can't take that from me. (*Blundering blindly to door, left.*) Oh, go, go, all of you. I want to be alone.

[*The door bell has been steadily ringing.* PETER *goes off left, and bangs the door behind him.*

GLAD. Will you let my brother in, Mrs. Garside?

[MRS. GARSIDE *goes right, and opens door, goes through and lets* FRED. *in.*

FRED. (*to* GLADYS). Thought you'd gone to sleep. (*Seeing* JONES.) Hello! Our friend of the election.

GLAD. (*impatiently*). Never mind these men. Come away.

FRED. Well, don't snap a fellow's head off. (NED *and* JONES *quietly go out right.*) Sorry I've been so long, only——

GLAD. It doesn't matter. (*Raising her voice, looking left*). Mr. Garside's been an entertainment in himself.

FRED. (*crossing*). Where is he? In there?

GLAD. (*crossing to right door*). Oh, will you come?

FRED. Must do the decent by our Member, you know.

GLAD. He's not our Member, he's resigned.

FRED. Good Lord! Why?

GLAD. Oh, can't you see we're not wanted here?

FRED. (*crossing towards her*). All right. Don't get vicious. Nothing to lose your temper over, is it ?

GLAD. I've lost more than my temper. I've lost a chance. . . . Oh, never mind. What's the next train for Midlandton ?

FRED. Train ? What you want's some supper. We've two more days of town.

GLAD. Yes. We'll eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die. You're standing me champagne to-night, Freddie.

[*She goes out right.* FRED. *looks after her, puzzled, crosses, and shakes* MRS. GARSIDE'S *limp hand.*

FRED. Good night, Mrs. Garside.

[*He follows* GLADYS. MRS. GARSIDE *goes right, the outer door closes, she turns light off in the hall and re-enters, closing the door behind her.* PETER *re-enters left, composed.*

PETER. Have they all gone ?

MRS. G. Yes. (*Pathetically puzzled.*) What does it all mean, Peter ?

PETER. Mean ? Ruin. My career's blasted. (*Sits at table, turning chair towards her.*)

MRS. G. But why, Peter ? I can't understand it. I——

PETER. Why ? Because I was too successful. Jealousy. That's it. They do nothing themselves, but they won't give young blood a chance. Mediocrity's their motto. They've no use for brains. So I'm kicked out.

MRS. G. Don't take on about it, deary. They'll find they can't do without you.

PETER. You'd always faith, hadn't you, mother ? (*Turning to table and putting his head on his hands.*) But I've fallen like Lucifer, never to rise again.

MRS. G. (*struck with a new delightful thought, hesitating to utter it*). Peter, it means—it means——

PETER (*not turning*). What ?

MRS. G. (*standing centre*). Oh, I'm so glad.

PETER (*leaping up angrily, and turning on her*). Glad !

MRS. G. I've been so unhappy here. I shall be glad to be in Midlandton again.

PETER (*disgustedly*). Midlandton! (*Shuddering.*) Those grimy streets reeking of poverty.

MRS. G. (*reproachfully*). Peter! Midlandton is home.

[*She gives way a little.* PETER *stands centre.*

PETER. Yes. After all, why not? The wounded lion crawls to its lair to die. (*Pause, looking straight out.*) I wonder. Am I a lion or only an ass braying in a lion's skin?

CURTAIN.

ACT IV

Scene as ACT I, *except that the room has a bareness indicative of a recent removal. The bookcase is on the floor instead of being fastened to the wall, and no pictures are hung.*

MRS. GARSIDE, *dressed as* ACT I, *sits dejectedly in the rocking-chair. A knock at the door, centre.* MRS. GARSIDE *sighs heavily, rouses herself slowly, crosses and opens door.* DENIS O'CALLAGAN *is on the doorstep. The blind is drawn. One incandescent light.*

O'CAL. May I come in, Mrs. Garside?

MRS. G. And welcome, Mr. O'Callagan.

[*He enters. She closes door.*

O'CAL. (*coming centre, in front of table, glancing upwards*). Still the same?

MRS. G. (*standing centre, gloomily*). Oh, yes. He doesn't seem to care for anything.

O'CAL. I can hear him moving about upstairs.

MRS. G. (*sitting left of table, as if too weary to stand*). I never hear anything else. It's driving me mad. Up and down, up and down, all day long, and all night too, till he drops because he's too tired to put one foot before the other. It's like a wild beast in a cage.

O'CAL. You've not got him to go out yet?

MRS. G. Nor look like doing till he's carried out feet foremost. He says he'll never show his face in Midlandton again. I've done all the work. Getting the furniture out of store and everything. Peter didn't raise a hand.

O'CAL. You dropped lucky finding the old house empty.

MRS. G. I don't know if I did. It reminds him. Won't take his food now. That's the latest. Not that I've much to give him. Heaven knows where it'll end. We with no money coming in and nearly every penny as we had gone to pay his debts in London and fetch us here. Workhouse next, I reckon.

O'CAL. (*patting her shoulder encouragingly*). Let you not be talking like that, Mrs. Garside. There's no call to despair. Peter's got to be roused.

MRS. G. Haven't we tried and failed? If you fancy you know the way to do it I'll be obliged by your telling me.

O'CAL. Oh, we've not tried them all yet.

MRS. G. (*vigorously*). Then for God's sake go up to him and try.

O'CAL. (*without moving*). Sure he's not himself at all.

MRS. G. (*rising, with more force in her voice*). Denis O'Callagan, if you've a plan to rouse my poor boy I've told you to go upstairs and try it on him. If you've come to stand there like a log and tell me what I've known this week and more, there's my door, and the sooner you put your ugly face outside it the better you'll please me.

O'CAL. (*giving way a little*). I come to tell you of the cure we will be putting on him. I'm thinking it won't be to your taste and you short tempered with your trouble.

MRS. G. Do you think I care what it is so it puts an end to this?

O'CAL. Is that the truth you're telling me?

MRS. G. Truth! Bless the man. I'm at the bitter end.

O'CAL. (*briskly*). Then I'll be stepping out and bringing out my cure. I didn't fetch her in because I knew you quarrelled with her. (*He reaches the door and puts his hand to the latch.*)

MRS. G. Stop! Do you mean Maragret Shawcross?

O'CAL. Yes. (*He takes a step towards table. They speak across it.*)

MRS. G. That woman doesn't cross my threshold.

O'CAL. The sight of her 'ull bring the life back into Peter.

MRS. G. No.

O'CAL. You said you wouldn't care what I did.

MRS. G. I didn't know you meant her.

O'CAL. (*coming round table*). No, and you called me all the names you could lay your tongue to when I came in last week.

MRS. G. I thought you one of the lot that ruined Peter. I've told you I'm sorry for what I said.

O'CAL. Yes. You see it now. Why won't you see Miss Shawcross is a friend as well?

MRS. G. (*sullenly*). She's a woman.

O'CAL. And can't you be mistaken about a woman just as much as a man?

MRS. G. She never did Peter any good. She always thought too little of him.

O'CAL. (*pleadingly*). Give her a chance, Mrs. Garside, she loves him.

MRS. G. She'd a queer way of showing it, then.

O'CAL. She loves him.

MRS. G. (*hotly*). And don't I love him? If love's all he wants to put him right, won't his mother——

O'CAL. There's different kinds of love. Let her try hers.

MRS. G. (*grimly*). Yes. Let her try.

O'CAL. (*moving eagerly*). May I?

MRS. G. Bring her in.

[O'CALLAGAN *goes to door, then turns suddenly suspicious.*

O'CAL. You're not going to be rude to her?

MRS. G. I'm going to give her her chance fair and square. Loves him, does she? We'll see if her love's good enough

to do what my love can't, and I'll own I'm wrong about her. She'll get no second chance.

O'CAL. She'll need none, neither.

MRS. G. Well, we'll see. Open the door and call her in.

[O'CALLAGAN *opens door and calls off.*

O'CAL. Will you come in, Miss Shawcross ?

[*Enter* MARGARET *in a plain winter costume with a cheap fur round her neck.*

O'CAL. (*in her ear as she passes him*). It's all right.

[*He closes door,* MARGARET *crosses to* MRS. GARSIDE.

MAR. (*anxiously—waiving ceremony*). How is he, Mrs. Garside ?

MRS. G. (*turning from her to* O'CALLAGAN). Bring him down, Denis, you know the way. (O'CALLAGAN *crosses and exit* R. MRS. GARSIDE *faces* MARGARET.) We'll understand each other first. You're here on sufferance. I've let you in same as I would a doctor, because O'Callagan thinks there's a chance you'll cure Peter. We're strangers till you've done it.

MAR. I understand. Thank you for letting me come. How is he ?

MRS. G. He's like to die because he doesn't want to live.

[*Enter* R., O'CALLAGAN *and* PETER, *whose spectacular disarray is nicely calculated. Physically he appears normal, but his ruffled hair, cross-buttoned waistcoat, unbuttoned collar and crooked black tie give the appearance of hopeless abandon. He enters wearily, forgetting himself for a moment on seeing* MARGARET *and speaking vigorously.*

PETER. You here ! (*Turns as if to go back, but* O'CALLAGAN *closes the door quickly.*) Why didn't you tell me, Denis ?

MAR. (*stepping forward*). Don't go. I've come to see you, Peter.

PETER. I'm not on exhibition. What have you come for ? To gloat over me, to see for yourself how well you

prophesied when you told me I should fail. (*He turns his back on her, only to face* O'CALLAGAN.)

O'CAL. I'm telling you you're not a failure. It's just a temporary check in your career you've had.

PETER (*sullenly*). My career's ended.

[MRS. GARSIDE *sits in the rocking-chair, aloof, watching.*

MAR. At twenty-six, Peter?

PETER (*turning*). That's my tragedy. Waste. At twenty-six I'm looking backward on a closed account. The future's blank—all the brilliant fruitful years I might have lived.

MAR. That you *will* live, Peter.

PETER (*sitting left of table, elbows on table and head in hands*). Oh, what's the use of that? I'm finished. Out, middle stump. And there's no second innings in life.

O'CAL. Isn't there? Don't the people need you just as much as ever?

PETER (*without turning to him*). The people have no use for broken idols, Denis.

MAR. But *we* need you, Peter.

PETER (*looking up*). Who are *we?*

MAR. Your own people.

PETER. You! You never believed in me.

MAR. I always thought you'd the wrong temperament for Parliament.

PETER. You knew me for the rotten failure that I am. I congratulate you on your perspicacity.

MAR. (*shaking her head*). I'm not proud of it. What do you propose to do?

PETER. I don't propose to do anything. (*Resuming the hopeless attitude*). I've shot my bolt. I'm a man with a past, an ex-M.P., ex-Everything.

O'CAL. (*with conviction*). You're a blazing idiot.

PETER. I quite agree.

O'CAL. You're not. You know you're not. I'm only saying it to rouse you.

PETER. You'll say nothing that I won't agree with.

O'CAL. All right. You've a big future before you.

PETER. I can't agree to that.

O'CAL. You have. You're going to——

PETER. I'm going to take it lying down, Denis, and that's all there is to it.

MAR. That's a pretty mean thing to say, Peter.

PETER. Oh, taunts don't sting me now. I've reached the further side of agony.

MAR. (*sitting at table, centre, leaning on it very close to* PETER, *and speaking without a trace of sympathy*). Peter, don't you think you've made sufficient demonstration of your grief ?

PETER. Demonstration ?

MAR. We're all tremendously impressed. You've thoroughly alarmed us. That's what you wanted, wasn't it ? (PETER *meets her eye questioningly.*) To prove to yourself that after all you're still of consequence to somebody. It's quite true, Peter. We're not content to watch you sulk to death. You've made your big effect. For a week you've had the joy of fostering your wound, keeping it open for all the world to see how hardly you've been hit, but it's time you healed it now.

PETER (*hiding his head on the table*). Misunderstood !

MAR. Misunderstood ? (*Rising and tapping the table.*) Or found out, Peter ? Which ?

PETER (*pitiably turning, still sitting, to* MRS. GARSIDE). Mother, you let these people in. Are you going to sit there and let them bully a sick man ?

MAR. (*admiringly*). That's a good pose, Peter. The great, strong, self-willed man brought down to crying to his mammie.

PETER (*in an agonised shriek*). Mother !

MRS. G. (*firmly*). I'm not going to interfere. I promised Margaret her own way.

PETER. But——

MRS. G. (*interrupting, dryly*). Besides, I think there may be something in it.

[PETER *hides his face again with a deep "Oh!"*

O'CAL. (*putting his hand on* PETER'S *shoulder*). Be a man, Peter.

PETER (*looking up at him*). Yes, it's all very well for you to talk. You with your beastly robust health. I'm an invalid.

MAR. I assure you, you're not looking half so feeble as you did. You're improving under treatment.

PETER. Then I must thrive on torture.

MAR. Something's doing you good. You're not the woebegone catastrophe you were.

PETER (*rising*). I won't tolerate this.

MAR. You prefer to be a catastrophe, in fact?

PETER (*moving right*). I want to be left alone. I'm going to my bedroom. You can't follow me there.

MAR. Oh, you'll not escape that way. I don't in the least mind invading your bedroom. A doctor has privileges.

PETER. All right. I'll go out, then. Mother, where's my hat?

MAR. Splendid. Fresh air will do you good.

PETER. I won't go out. They'll mock me in the streets.

MAR. Then you prefer my medicine? I'll go on dosing you.

PETER (*sitting centre, behind table, covering face*). I'll close my eyes and stop my ears.

MAR. (*taking her hat off*). The night is young. (*She puts her hat on the bookcase and her fur on it.*)

PETER (*turning and watching her*). Oh! So it's to be a trial of strength, is it?

MAR. Just as you like. As I'm strong and you're weak, I ought to win.

PETER. We'll see if I'm weak.

MAR. Of course, I've only your word for it.

[MARGARET *takes chair from wall, right, and puts it before fire.*

PETER. Weak as I am, I'm strong enough to tire you out. (*Folding his arms.*)

MAR. I don't go to work till nine in the morning. (*Sitting on her chair.*) You don't mind my making myself comfortable for the night, Mrs. Garside ?

MRS. G. I've told you I'm not interfering, Margaret. You can do as you like.

MAR. Denis, go home. I want to be alone with Peter.

PETER. Stay where you are, Denis. Don't leave me alone with her.

O'CAL. Don't ! But I will and sharp too, for it's wishing you a quick recovery I am, and the more you hate your medicine the better it is for you. Good night.

[*Exit* O'CALLAGAN, L.

MAR. Now, Peter, I'm going to talk to you.

MRS. G. I'll take myself out of your way. (*Going* R.)

PETER. Mother ! You too ! Haven't I a friend in the world ?

MRS. G. You wouldn't listen to me. It's her turn now. Call me if you want me, Margaret.

[*Exit* MRS. GARSIDE, R.

PETER (*sitting* C., *stopping his ears*). I shan't listen.

MAR. (*sitting and making herself ostentatiously comfortable in the rocking-chair, poking fire*). Oh, take your time. I'm quite comfortable. (*She leans back humming "Home, Sweet Home."*)

PETER (*unstopping his ears*). What ?

MAR. Oh, could you hear ? You're such a bad listener as a rule. You much prefer to talk.

PETER (*folding his arms*). My talking days are past. I'll be as mute as a fish. Go on. Say what you like. I'll stand it all.

MAR. (*rising and looking down on him*). Peter, Peter, how young you are!

PETER (*rising excitedly*). Young! I'm not young.

MAR. I thought you were going to be silent.

PETER (*walking up and down*). Young! As if youth had anything to do with arithmetic and the number of one's years. I'm old in suffering and experience. I'm an old, old man.

MAR. (*standing* C. *against table, watching*). When you sow wild oats that old feeling is usually part of the crop.

PETER (*hotly*). I haven't sown wild oats. I'm not that sort of man. (*Hesitating.*) Unless you mean——

MAR. I didn't, but I might have done.

PETER (*sitting, sullenly*). I wish there were no such things as women in the world!

MAR. The bi-sexual system has its disadvantages. But we'll forget Miss Mottram, Peter. That was a private indiscretion. You sowed your wild oats publicly in the fierce light that beats upon a politician. That was the arrogance of youth.

PETER. I'm not so young as you.

MAR. No. Youth is a gift we both possess. I don't intend to waste mine, Peter.

PETER. No? Well, you've me before you as an awful warning. I'm a living cautionary tale. I'm—— O, what's the good of talking?

MAR. Here's a change of front! You used to tell me talking was the finest thing you knew.

PETER. Margaret, have you no reverence at all?

MAR. For talking?

PETER. For human suffering. You're mocking at my life's tragedy. You hummed a tune just now you must have known was agony to me. My home in Midlandton! It's like living in an ashpit.

MAR. Oh, no, it's not, and if it is, the microbes can be happy in their insignificance.

PETER (*solemnly*). I shall not know happiness again.

MAR. Oh, need you keep it up with me, Peter?

PETER (*surprised*). Keep what up?

MAR. The pose. You've had your fun with us.

PETER. Fun!

MAR. You've brought us to your feet. We've all come: all of us who care.

PETER. Care? What do you care for me? Why should you care for a broken man, a derelict, one of the legion of the lost, a rotten——

MAR. (*vigorously*). Will you stop embroidering? Do you think I've come to listen to all the pretty phrases you've spent a week inventing about yourself?

PETER. Heaven knows what you came for.

MAR. You know as well as Heaven does.

PETER. Do I? But it's—— So much has happened since. That's all so long ago.

MAR. Less than a year, Peter.

PETER. A year! What's a year! From poverty to Parliament, from Parliament to hell.

MAR. Still spinning phrases, Peter.

PETER (*sincerely*). I'm a pauper, Margaret. That's not a phrase, it's a fact.

MAR. Is there no work to be done in the world?

PETER. A man like me wants something else than bread to work for. I had a career once, it's gone to-day.

MAR. Thank God, it is.

PETER. Yes, if you like, thank God for it. It deserved to go. But nothing's left worth living for.

MAR. I'll give you that.

PETER. What?

MAR. The object, Peter. Don't say again you don't know why I came.

PETER. Yes, Margaret, I know.

MAR. Why not admit it, then?

PETER. Because I daren't. A man who's fallen as I

fell deserves no second chance. I've been a silly fool, but it won't mend that to be a criminal fool.

MAR. What do you mean by being a criminal fool?

PETER. I might have acted as I meant to act when next I saw you.

MAR. How did you mean to act?

PETER. I meant to ask forgiveness on my knees for all the things I said to you. Up in my room I'd come to see it all, see what a swine I'd been, how right you were, how much you knew me better than I knew myself. I thought in London that I'd met the worst. I thought my bitterest hour was past. But worst and bitterest of all was when I realised all that I'd done to you, all that that doing made me miss.

MAR. (*hardly*). Then when I came you didn't do as you intended.

PETER. Margaret, I saw you and I felt ashamed. It's one thing to decide within one's mind to do a thing, but quite another thing to do it in the flesh. I saw you, saw the suffering in your face and knew that I had caused it all. I felt ashamed to speak.

MAR. Ashamed to ask forgiveness? Ashamed to carry out your plan?

PETER. We weren't alone. There were others there.

MAR. Just pride, in fact. You were too proud to ask. And when the others went?

PETER. Oh, yes. Yes. Pride again. Then, too, until——

MAR. Till when? You've not asked yet.

PETER. Margaret, am I worth while forgiving?

MAR. Peter, when your mother let me come, I came.

PETER. Yes!

MAR. So I thought it worth while.

PETER. Margaret, you are so beautiful, and I——

MAR. Listen to me, Peter. You tell me I am beautiful. You told me I am young. I am, but I'm a year older

than I was twelve months ago. Twelve months ago, when you——

PETER. Yes. I know.

MAR. It's been a crowded year for you. (*Gesture from* PETER.) Too crowded, yes, but there was glamour in it all. You've paid a price, but you've known the flavour of success. You've had your fun. I've spent my year in Midlandton—(PETER *shudders*)—a place where one can live, Peter. Oh, yes, one can. But I've been lonely here. A year's dropped from me sadly, slowly. I've kept myself alive and that, the daily round, is all my history, while you—well, never mind. The past is past. We're where we were a year ago, a little older, just a little less in love with life, but still we're here, Peter. You and I, just as we were before.

PETER. Just as we were ?

MAR. Why not ? Love understands. We're both a little scarred. We both need picking up and making whole. We need each other, Peter.

PETER. You need me ! Margaret, you're not just putting it that way because——

MAR. Because it's true. We need each other badly.

PETER (*taking her*). Margaret !

MAR. So you will have me, Peter ?

PETER. I think I always loved you, Margaret. Throughout the madness of my pride, behind it all, I think I never quite forgot the great reality of you. I've been ambition's drunkard, but behind the mist of self-deluded dream, the light shone dimly through. London brought me no peace.

MAR. I'll bring you peace.

PETER. I think you will. (*From her.*) Oh, but it's madness, madness, Margaret. What are we thinking of ?

MAR. Our happiness.

PETER. Yes, for a moment we've been happy fools. Now I'm awake.

MAR. And so ?

PETER. And so good-bye.

MAR. Indeed ?

PETER. Oh, would to God, it needn't be. But here I am, an outcast, and——

MAR. (*quickly*). No phrases, Peter.

PETER. I'm a man without a job, Margaret. I can't keep myself, let alone anyone else.

MAR. Have you tried ?

PETER. I've thought of ways. Scraps of journalism, perhaps. I might live that way for a time. I'm a notorious person. They'll take my stuff until—my—my escapade's forgotten. Then they'll drop me.

MAR. Excellent reasons for not being a journalist.

PETER. I'm fit for nothing else. I thought I had supporters, friends who'd rally round when the official party sent me to the rightabout. I've waited there a week. I have no friends.

MAR. You don't need friends. You want an employer, and I thought you were a skilled mechanic.

PETER. Yes. As a matter of fact I did have a vague idea of going in for aeroplanes.

MAR. Oh, Peter, Peter, still the high flights !

PETER (*earnestly*). There's money in it, Margaret.

MAR. For the mechanic ?

PETER. I shouldn't be a mechanic long. A man of original mind like me is bound to be ahead of the crowd. I've to keep moving fast. I can't wait for the mob to catch me up. Yes, there's something in that aeroplane idea.

MAR. There is. Fame. Applause. Incense. Everything that ruined you before.

PETER. You can't be famous without risk.

MAR. Why be famous ?

PETER. That's your doing. You wakened my ambitions. They're there now, ineradically fixed, and if they weren't there for myself, they would be there for you.

MAR. For me? I don't want them, Peter. Fight them down. Be humble.

PETER. I'm not built for humility.

MAR. Drop your ambition, Peter. You will feel like Christian when he lost his pack.

PETER. What do you want me to do?

MAR. There is always room for you at your old place.

PETER. Back to the mechanic's bench. In Midlandton, where everybody knows! That's humble pie with a vengeance.

MAR. A new beginning, Peter.

PETER. There's no such thing. In life, we pay.

MAR. We'll pay together then.

PETER. I can't go back.

MAR. A man can do things for his woman, Peter, when he can't do them for himself.

PETER. You want me to go back?

MAR. Yes, Peter, back to the starting-place.

PETER. It's a bitter pill.

MAR. But won't you swallow it—for me? For my sake, Peter.

PETER. Yes, Margaret, you've won. I'll go back if they'll have me.

MAR. Thank you, Peter.

PETER. Don't thank me, dear. It's——

MAR. Why not? It means I'm going to have my heart's desire.

PETER. What's that?

MAR. Just you.

PETER. Margaret!

MAR. Yes, Peter.

PETER. Are you happy?

MAR. Yes.

PETER. Yes? Only yes? When I'm almost afraid to be so happy, when——

MAR. Yes, Peter, when you are down, you are very, very down, and when you're up you are up——

PETER. That's the way with all geniuses—— Oh, I forgot. I'm not a——

MAR. Never mind. You're genius enough for me. Only, we'll stop telling other people about it, eh, Peter? Now let's go to your mother.

[*They move* R. *together.*

CURTAIN.

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WILLIAM BRENDON AND SON, LTD.
PLYMOUTH